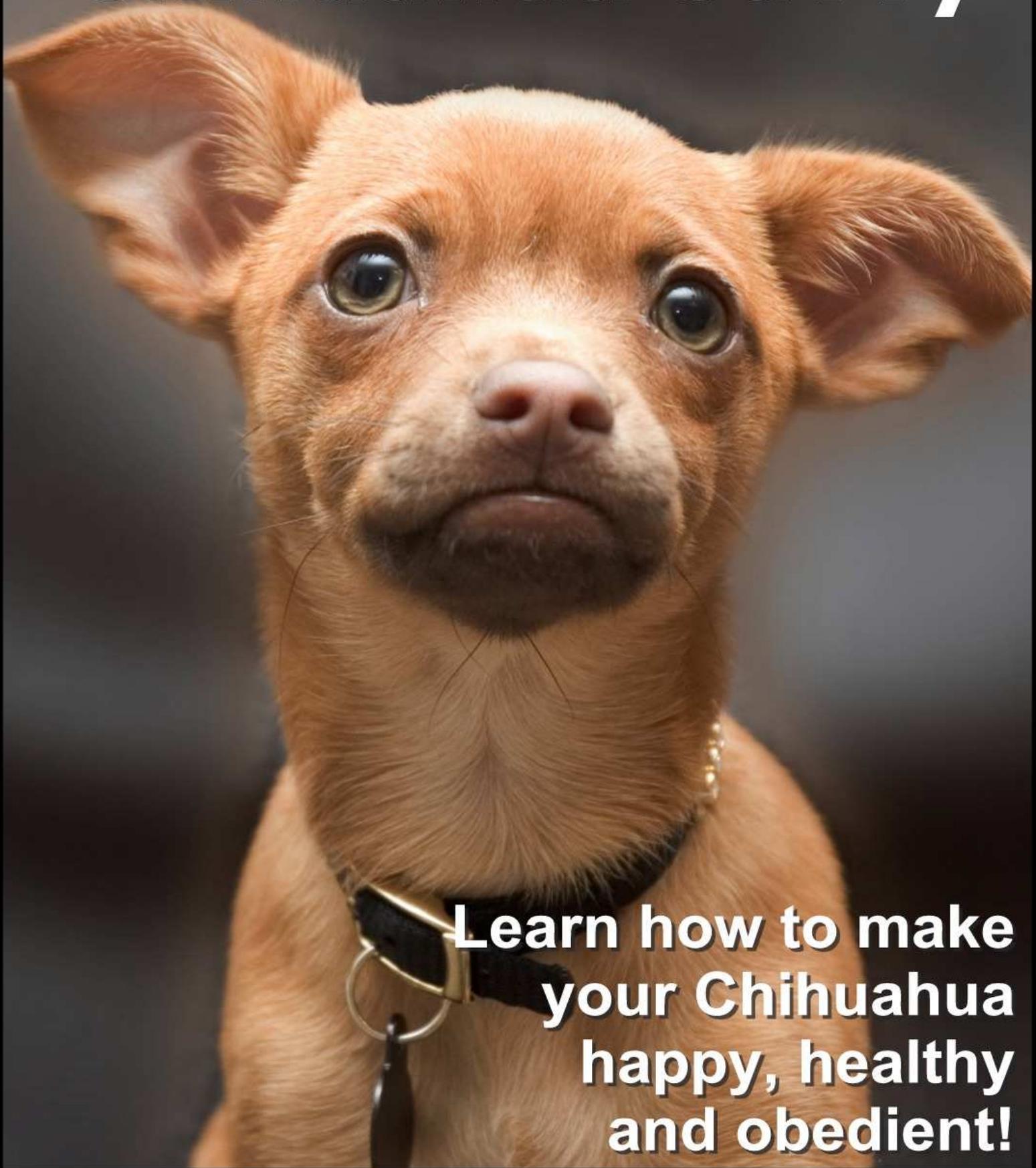


Chihuahua Savvy



**Learn how to make
your Chihuahua
happy, healthy
and obedient!**

Step-by-step expert guide by Barbara Scott

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Introduction

The Chihuahua is an energetic, alert, cocky pint-sized dog that has become one of the most sought after of all the toy canine companion breeds. But what is it about the Chihuahua that makes its breed so special and unique? That's what my ebook "Chihuahua Savvy" is here to do - teach you the interesting facts and tips that are associated with loyal and happy natured Chihuahua.

Now you might be thinking, "So what, another dog book...what makes this one so great?" My answer to you is plain and simple, "Chihuahua Savvy" is comprised of careful and extensive research provided from experts and dog lovers just like you, who have not only done their homework, but have actually enjoyed the experience of raising a Chihuahua as a part of their family.

In order to create this ebook, I carefully conducted months of research, and collected information from numerous Chihuahua enthusiasts and owners, learning from their tips and individual experiences.

In addition to this information I discovered other important facts from different Chihuahua books I purchased from the local bookstore, as well as using helpful internet resources where I was able to find and read an abundance of articles and forum posts, which provided me with the opportunity to compare notes and consider further information.

I can tell you that this was certainly a lot of work, but work that truly paid off in the end. Not only did I learn everything there is to know about Chihuahua but I was able to compile this ebook to share with you all of the fascinating information to help you improve upon the quality of your Chihuahua life, ensuring that it is kept healthy, strong, active and happy.

Enjoy "Chihuahua Savvy", and look forward to sharing many wonderful years with your dog.

Barbara Scott
June 2006



Chihuahua Dogs at a Glance

Chi's, as they are often called, are high spirited, intelligent, and for the most part are even tempered. They adore human companionship, but need careful handling because of their small size, and can be injured should they be handled roughly.

Chihuahuas and Chihuahua puppies generally like older children (10 and up) who know how to play with them, and can get along with other pets, but are happiest with their own kind. They are known to be temperamental, and are quick to become aggressive should they be startled.

Most reputable breeders would recommend 'adopting' Chihuahua puppies between the ages of 4 and 12 months when they are a little more agile and not so prone to injury.

Chihuahua puppies are eager to learn, although they are not usually trained due to their tiny size. However, training is encouraged with this breed, as it helps to socialize them, and lessens their tendency to show aggression.

Chihuahua's come in two different coat types, smooth, short-haired and long-haired. They have been around for several hundred years, although their exact origin is disputed. American tourists brought specimens in the mid 1800's – and subsequently this little dog became one of the most popular breeds in North America.

Our 4 Paw Rating - to the suitability of Chihuahuas and Chihuahuas puppies for your home and lifestyle

Size 🐾

Shoulder height 6 - 9inches, weight 2 - 4lbs

Coat Care 🐾🐾🐾

Chihuahua's require daily brushing if they have long-haired coats. Short-haired coated Chihuahua's groom themselves.

Family Life 🐾🐾

Usually bonds with only one person, not suitable for household with boisterous children and other pets due to its very small size

Lifestyle 🐾🐾

Ideal for apartment living, loves human attention – suits the less active individual

Health 🐾🐾🐾

Life expectancy 14 - 18 years

Cardiac, hypoglycemic and knee tests recommended for Chihuahua puppies. A soft spot in the skull known as molera is a common breed trait, and needs to be taken into consideration, as a blow to this area of the head could be lethal to the Chihuahua.

Exercise 🐾

Can usually get sufficient exercise by running around the apartment

Training 🐾

Chihuahua puppies are not usually trained due to their tiny size, but are keen to please, and make for better dogs when given discipline!



What is a Chihuahua?

Chihuahua's are a loyal dog breed. They are the smallest dog breed known, and naturally having different dispositions than their mid-, large- and extra large-sized cousins.

They are naturally an alert and lively breed that is eager to play and please, making them well-liked and an excellent companion. The Chihuahua is renowned for its boisterous character. With its high intelligence and aptitude to bark, the Chihuahua makes an appealing pet and a very alert watch dog. Chihuahua's are an old breed, and to this day, they have maintained their clever, energetic and bold nature.

Throughout history Chihuahua's have made excellent

- Companions
- Lap dogs – used for warming laps, and snuggling close in bed
- Symbols of Wealth

They also make ideal and friendly companions, as they appear quire fearless, are loyal, playful and alert.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) categorizes dogs into 7 groups:

- herding
- hound
- non-sporting
- sporting
- terrier
- toy
- working

The Chihuahua is recognized as a part of the toy group by the American Kennel Club and the Kennel Club of the United Kingdom, and is considered an intelligent and compatible breed.

“Toy” dogs is a reference to the size of the dog. The small size and sweet expressions of these dogs illustrate the main function of this group: to delight the owner. Many Toys are very tough; so don't let their small size fool you. Toys have always been popular with people that live in cities and apartments.

Aside from their natural instincts, Chihuahua's can be temperamental, but normally have an even temperament and their small size that makes them the ideal apartment dog. They do not need a large amount of exercise and some can

be finicky eaters. They are intelligent companions but owners must be discretionary with their attention as spoiled dogs can become protective of their owners. Ideally these dogs are extroverted companions and not untouchable ornaments.

Devoted and pleased owners of Chihuahua's have come up with a long list of attributes and traits of their favorite pet that include:

- Alert
- Boisterous
- Bold
- Boundless energy
- Brave
- Companion
- Courageous
- Devoted
- Dignified
- Eager to Please
- Exuberance
- Fearless
- Free spirited
- Happy
- Intuitive
- Loving
- Loyal
- Mischievous
- Noble
- Outgoing
- People dog
- Playful
- Self-assured
- Smart
- Soulful
- Spirited
- Spunky
- Territorial
- Temperamental
- Vigilant
- Wonderful pet

And you can add to the list...

Chihuahua History

The Chihuahua is one of the oldest breeds known in history. Although they were only discovered and brought to America in the mid 19th century, there are historical facts which suggest that the ancestors of the breed we now know today have in fact been around since before 1530, as artifacts from the Cholula Pyramids and the ruins of the Chichen Itza found on the Yucatan Peninsula determine.

It is said that the Chihuahua ancestors were the Techichi companions of the ancients Toltecs, and were also necessary for religious purposes. Unfortunately, it is still disputed as to when this breed actually came into existence, as information on the Techichi only goes back so far as the 9th century. Despite disputes, it is most commonly believed that the ancestors of the Chihuahua were in existence before the Mayans.

Regardless of the doubts of time and origin, there is no question that the present-day Chihuahua's native land is Mexico, and was brought to Europe's attention in the 16th century by the famous Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus, who mentioned the pint-sized pooch in his letter to the King of Spain.

Modern Chihuahua's are smaller than their predecessors, and this is believed to be the cause of crossing the original Techichi breed with the Chinese Crested, which occurred when the Chinese Crested were brought to Alaska from Asia.

The name Chihuahua is taken from the Mexican State of Chihuahua, where the initial type of the breed was found.

Chihuahua's have always been known to come in a variety of coat colors, and were first registered in the American Kennel Club in 1904.

Happy, Alert and Loving Dog

The Chihuahua is a loveable, spirited little pal that will never leave you feeling lonely. He is a charming fellow with a lot of pizzazz and a larger than life attitude. He has sweet features and many wonderful characteristics.

The Chihuahua is the breed with the smallest stature, but he is still very compact with a level back, medium length neck that has a slight arch, a deep brisket and straight legs that are spaced ideally apart, turned neither out nor in. His head is rounded nicely and his skull is shaped like the dome of an apple. He has lean jaws and cheeks, and a moderately short muzzle that comes to a slight point.

The Chihuahua's mouth is a perfect scissor bite and he has strong jaws. His eyes, one of his most distinguishing features are large and round, and spaced well apart. Eye color can be dark, ruby or even light, in cases when they have a fair shaded coat. Their ears, yet another trademark feature, are large and stick

straight up at a 45 degree angle.

The Chihuahua's padded feet are really tiny, strong, flexible, and like his legs, turn neither out nor in. This feature, along with his legs, provides the Chihuahua with a brisk and energetic gait.

The tail of a Chi is set high, medium in length, broadens a bit in the middle and narrows to a point. It is carried with pride up over the back. Depending on the coat of the Chihuahua, the tail may look flat or fluffy in appearance, and with the long coat, it fans out at the tip.

The smooth coat of the Chihuahua has a very fine, silky texture, appears glossy and is close to the skin. The long coat also has a silken texture, and it can have a slight wave or be flat, but shouldn't be curly. Long coat Chi's also have feathering on their feet, legs and ears. The coloring of the coat can be any mixture of colors, from light to dark.

Without a doubt, the Chihuahua will win you over with his charm, looks and affection – He is truly one of a kind.

The Fable of the Teacup Chihuahua

For all of you curious folk out there who have heard about a “teacup Chihuahua” and are dying to know what one looks like, let me begin by dashing your dreams in saying – There is no such thing as a Teacup Chihuahua.

The Chihuahua is already incredibly small, and any Chi that is less than 3 lbs faces serious health problems, such a hypoglycemia that can cause seizure and death, fragile bones, poor tooth growth and weak organs! So let this be a lesson learned, you do not want a Chihuahua that is under 3 lbs. After all, they already make plenty of purses that conveniently fit the standard sized Chihuahua, any smaller and the poor little Chi would be wallet sized!



Chihuahua's as Pets

Considered to be the ideal companion dogs for the elderly, a homebody, and apartment dwellers, the Chihuahua are a popular choice simply because they are alert and loveable. However, like most dogs, the Chihuahua requires plenty of attention and the proper care and some training in order for them to develop as a credit to their breed. If left to fend for themselves, they will not only become lonely, but will seek ways to get your attention through acts of mischief you won't find so endearing.

How to Keep Your Chihuahua Out of Mischief

Chihuahua puppies love to chew. Whatever they can sink their teeth into becomes a favorite toy, if only for the moment. To keep your puppy from wreaking chewing havoc on your house, you have to be able to give them the attention and exercise they need. Your puppy is not trying to anger you--the Chihuahua's nature would never even conceive of such a thing; instead, your dog just wants to play. It's up to you to decide how playtime is spent: chewing up the household or a nice walk around the block.

At least twice a day, make the effort to take your Chihuahua out for a pleasant walk. If you have a backyard, let it race around in it and be sure to give you Chihuahua some quality playtime. Like the other toy dog breeds, the Chihuahua requires only a little bit of exercise, due to its small size, so make sure you don't over do it by taking him out for a run, jog, or walks longer than 20 minutes.

It doesn't take much to give your Chihuahua the attention it needs; only your time and participation, which will certainly pay off when you gain a loving, faithful companion in your dog.

Great Ways To Bond With Your Chihuahua

If you're like the majority of people these days, you spend long hours away from your home, and wish to spend some great quality time with your Chihuahua while you are at home with him or her. However, sitting in front of the television, or on the front porch can only do so much for the bonding experience, not to mention the prevention of boredom. Instead, there are lots of things that you can do to get closer with your dog. As you can see, they needn't be difficult, expensive, or even tiring. They're just about enjoying each other!

- Have a Companion's Night In – rent a movie where the main actors are dogs, pop some popcorn, grab some dog bones, and chill out for the evening with your canine companion. Many dogs actually enjoy seeing other dogs on television, and even if they're oblivious to the moving

screen, the dog bones and your company are just enough bonding and relaxation for a quality evening. If you want to add some spice to your evening, make it a Companion's Night Out, and catch a dog flick at the local drive-in movie theatre that is dog friendly. Then you can experience the big screen together too!

- Get a Mini-Frisbee...and throw it – Tossing a Frisbee is not only fun for you and your dog, but it allows your dog to get some much needed exercise to stay in shape, and avoid getting fat. And hey, you never know, but a year from now, you and your pooch may be competing at the next Frisbee championships! If your dog likes fetch, then Frisbee will be a fast favorite.
- Walk, Silly! – walk for at least a half hour around your neighborhood to let your dog see the sights and smell the smells. It may be the same houses to you, but the smells are always changing, making every day a new adventure for your dog. If you want to throw in some extra fun for your dog, take a different route every day. Even if there is only one route available to you, alternate the direction in which you make the circuit. Weather permitting, you can also go for a hike, provided you can apply some insect repellent on yourself, and some flea and tick repellent on your dog.
- Have a picnic – head out to the nearest dog-friendly park – no matter how big or small – and pack a picnic lunch. Take a leisure stroll out there and around the park, and then enjoy your lunches together in the great outdoors.
- Learn something new – your dog is always willing to learn and to please you. So why not teach him or her a new trick? Even if you spend only ten minutes on the trick every day, it'll be a great way for you to enjoy each other's company, and work together towards a common goal. Make sure to keep it fun, and stop each session before either of you is tired or frustrated.
- Have a ball – or any other kind of toy for that matter. Take your dog to the local pet store – as long as the pet store allows dogs into the store – and let your dog pick out his or her next toy. This way, you'll know that your dog likes the toy even before you buy it!

As you can see, it's really quite easy and fun to share time with your Chihuahua, and get some real bonding in.

What some proud owners say about their pet Chihuahauh

* “Chihuahua dogs think they are human. Treat them like one - love them, talk to them, cuddle them and value them and you will get your love back unconditionally 10,000 times.”

* “Chihuahua are the most loyal companions. My Chihuahua always knows how to make me happy when I’m down. Chihuahua’s are the only dogs for me.”

* “Chihuahua’s are the greatest gift! The one I have is always happy and is forever putting me in a great mood. She is truly the best companion in the world.”

* “Bringing a puppy or even an older dog into your home and your life is a major decision. It brings with it responsibility and commitment, but it also renders supreme joy, laughter, and sadly, but inevitably, tears. Not one of us who has ever shared his life with a Chihuahua would have it any other way.”

* “My Chihuahua always knows how I’m feeling, and is right by my side through the good and bad times”

* I can tell my Chihuahua anything, he is the best keeper of secrets”

* “Chihuahua’s love to snuggle! I always feel so loved whenever he’s by my side.”

* “Nothing is more beautiful than watching a Chihuahua when it is lying happily in the light of the sun.”

*” There is nothing more I look forward to, then going home after a long day at work, to be greeted by my Chihuahua who is so happy to see me and wants nothing more than to be loved back.”



So are You Ready for a Chihuahua?

Owning a Chihuahua is unlike owning any other dog breed. As you are already aware, it is the smallest breed with probably the biggest attitude. The Chihuahua also has one of, if not the longest life spans, so you will need to be prepared to provide, live and care for your little Chi for up to 18 years.

Furthermore, although a Chihuahua will bond graciously with an owner, he is not always quick to warm up to other family members, and for the most part, dislikes outsiders. Additionally, Chihuahuas are an expensive breed to buy, and are extremely fragile due to their small size. Thus, they generally do not make good family dogs, and don't mix well with children and other family pets unless properly trained.

Today the Chihuahua is among the most popular toy dog breeds in America, due to its affectionate and playful nature and loyal, devoted companionship. However, like any other dog, owning a Chihuahua takes work, dedication and an awful lot of patience.

Although Chihuahuas are a beautiful breed, many of them end up back at the pound not even 6 months after they are taken in by a family, simply because the owners didn't take into perspective how much work the dog was going to be. That being the case, you need to understand that if you decide to make a Chihuahua a part of your family, remember; you are committing to train, love, and maintain the health and care of the dog for a possible 18 years.

Therefore, before you get a Chihuahua, there are some essential aspects you need to take into account, to decide if a Chihuahua is really the dog for you.

Chihuahua's Crave Attention

Your Chihuahua craves attention, specifically yours. If you are not able to meet the high standards of affection, then a Chihuahua is not for you. You become their world and they will do anything to stay with you at all times. The love of a Chihuahua is a wonderful thing but, for some people, that love cannot be met.

If the Chihuahua had its way, it would never leave your side; you two would be constant companions, traveling the world together. Reality doesn't always comply, however, to the Chihuahua's perfect scenario--sometimes, you just can't take your pet with you. To appease the loneliness your dog feels when you're away, be sure to lavish much praise and attention on him. When you are home with your Chihuahua, show him that he is still a member of your family, even if he cannot always be with you.

It is also important to provide your Chihuahua with public, social attention, especially if you wish to get him used to visitors. You can achieve this by taking him to areas that are frequented by other people. This will encourage your Chihuahua to interact and befriend others, leading him away from the possibility of becoming overly aggressive. This also helps to delude the common small dog issue of over-protectiveness that may develop towards you when other people are around. If your Chihuahua is used to seeing you interact with other people, and even other animals, at a young age, he will be less overly-possessive about you.

Finally, talk with your Chihuahua! Whether you converse about the weather or talk mindless "baby-talk", your Chihuahua will go wild. He only wants to be included in your life; by talking with him, you give him what he wants.

Chihuahua's Love To Chew

One owner says - "I almost lost my entire wardrobe to my Chihuahua puppy. I can't believe how much he can chew and destroy in the course of an afternoon."

People do not usually associate destruction with the lovable and pint-size Chihuahua; however, charming as this breed is, it is also a natural born "chewer".

The bad news: you won't be able to break this natural instinct. The good news: with plenty of exercise and a little training, you won't have to. As puppies mature, they tend to grow out of this habit. But, even mature dogs can slip back into the pattern of chewing on your favorite pair of sneakers. That is why it is so important to give your dog basic training; by teaching him, you can remind him that chewing is not a favorable solution--your Chihuahua will do anything for you; all you have to do is show him what you want.

Before training is completed, however, be prepared to lose: shoes, clothing, books, papers and other treasured items. To lessen this, given you Chihuahua plenty of attention and chew toys; he won't have the need to chew if he is being well taken care of.

You should also keep in mind that bored Chihuahua's are also prone to chewing electrical cords, so be careful of what you leave on the floor to protect both you and your puppy.

Chihuahua's as Watch Dogs

A very alert watch dog, the Chihuahua loves to bark. They are too small to function as a guard dog, but they will certainly bring strangers to your attention.

The rambunctious, loyal Chihuahua does not make friends easily, but although obstinate he can respond well to consistent patient training. They are arrogant

and clever but marvelous companions when properly trained.



Chihuahua's Need Exercise And Lots of Attention

You will be surprised when you find out just how much energy your Chihuahua has. You will need to take your Chihuahua on decent walks twice a day, but you shouldn't exercise him for more than 45 minutes a day, as his body isn't able to endure strenuous workouts. Nevertheless, it will always be pleasing for your Chihuahua to engage in play time, after all you won't want your Chihuahua to be inactive and become overweight, as this can cause health problems.

Remember, if your Chihuahua does not receive the exercise or attention it needs daily, he will resort to other ways of venting his frustrations and energies by revealing his mischievous nature through tearing up your home, shredding your mail or redecorating your rooms with toilet paper.



Chihuahua's Are Temperamental

Without question, one of the first aspects you will come to learn of the Chihuahua breed is the fact that they can be extremely temperamental. Although, endearing and sweet to their owner, they are very suspicious of strangers and are quick to turn quite nasty should they be startled or feel their territory is being disrupted.

Never underestimate the intelligence of your Chihuahua. He will take over your household given half the chance, and has no problem claiming what he deems his – including you. Therefore, in order to break your Chihuahua from becoming to overbearing, take the time to train and socialize him with others while he is still young, to get him used to your lifestyle.



Kennel Clubs and Chihuahua Pedigrees

There are kennel clubs located in different countries that are devoted to maintaining the survival of purebred dogs, as well as hosting a number of dog shows, and various other events. The two best known clubs are those in the UK and the US.

About the UK Kennel Club

Beginning in the spring of 1873, the UK Kennel Club has worked to benefit dogs by seeking to encourage improvements in their breeds. For instance, their website is devoted to providing dog owners with ideal information that will help them to better understand how to properly care for their dogs, as well as giving detailed facts about every breed.

Currently the UK Kennel Club recognizes 196 different dog breeds, has over 1500 members registered, and hosts a number of different dog competitions and events.

About the American Kennel Club

The American Kennel Club was founded in 1884, and is a non-profit organization that works to encourage owners to understand the responsibilities of owning a dog, endorses dog events, and maintains a registry devoted to purebred dogs.

Their website provides detailed information regarding numerous purebreds that can be found in the 7 dog categories as listed on page10 of this ebook.

The American Kennel Club does not sell dogs, and is proud to sponsor over 15,000 competitions for dogs every year that are held by the ACK members or licensed clubs.

The American Kennel Club also encourages and supports purebred dogs as a sport.

Chihuahua pedigrees

You may be interested in learning the individual heritage of your dog to discover if there are any champions in your dog's lineage. This ancestral lineage of your dog is what is known as its pedigree.

The basic starting point, when distinguishing the Chihuahua pedigree, is

champions and phenotype.

For instance, when you adopted your Chihuahua, he or she should have come with information that classified them with particular genetic characteristics. The following is three important breeding factors for you to consider when learning of your Chi's pedigree:

Outcrossing: This is when the sire (male) and dam (female) dog used for breeding are completely un-related. The point to this type of breeding is to usually create a new line of Chihuahua, such as a different sized head, face shape, an improvement of colors, body and so on.

Line Breeding: This type of breeding occurs between a sire and dam that are remotely related, such as a grandson - grandmother, nephew - aunt, half cousins, etc. This is the most popular form of breeding, as it is the best strategy for maintaining a pedigree.

Inbreeding: This is a form of breeding usually frowned upon, as it often results in genetic health problems and defects, and is one of the major reasons why so many purebreds of some dog breeds are dying out. The sire and dam of this form of breeding is closely linked such as son - mother, father – daughter, brother – sister.

As you can see, there are many different genetic ways that need to be considered when it comes to identifying the specific pedigree that is connected to your dog.

You also may not have realized it, but your Chihuahua's body structure, coloring and features say a lot about his particular pedigree that can be traced back to a number of sires and dams throughout the years. Each Chihuahua has different characteristics.



Choosing Your Chihuahua

An easier and more pleasant journey with your chosen Chihuahua starts with checking out the parent dogs for unbecoming traits like inherit health problems such as eye ailments or heart disease, frequent interbreeding, or undesirable differences in appearance when compared to the Standard.

This is an easier task to accomplish when you purchase your Chihuahua from a reputable breeder or from select pet shops that obtain their animals only from known breeders.

Exercise prudence if you are getting your Chihuahua puppy from pet stores, which often get their supply from breeders of unknown reputation - such as puppy mills.

These “puppy mills” as they are called, place little emphasis on the quality and health of the pups they are producing, not to mention the inhumane treatment that the pups and bitches receive while they are there.

Reputable breeders would adhere to the accepted standards Chihuahua in terms of uniformity in the breed, good health, temperament, size and color; often insuring your companion with a guarantee.

Reputable breeders would be able to show the pedigree and registration papers and/or pictures of the parent dogs that may reside somewhere else.

Professional breeders are also there to produce dog show champions or prospects, which means that they are proud of the quality of their puppies.

In fact, even if you are not looking to raise a show champion Chihuahua, known breeders can provide you with some “best buy” puppies because not all the puppies in a litter are show prospect/champion materials.

Nevertheless, the full litter would have had benefited from the same proven bloodlines, nutrition and medical care. So you can choose from among the good-looking brothers or sisters of a potential champion for a bargain.

There is nothing wrong with a bargain, but look at all bargains with a critical eye. Find out the reasons why the puppy in question is being sold at a lesser price. After all, from a financial standpoint, it doesn't matter how much you pay for the dog, as long as it saves you money in medical bills years later (not to mention the emotional struggle of watching a dog suffer).

Besides reputable breeders, your other source option is animal shelters; in the

US alone, they receive up to 12 million homeless dogs and cats every year, and about 25% of them are purebred. Paying the adoption fee is a lot cheaper than the price you will pay to a breeder or pet store, and you will be saving a life.

The definition of good stock or purebred must include beauty, and in a Chihuahua look means the short or long coat is rich, well-groomed and in the case of the long haired coat it should be thick. The ears should be erect, and not cropped or broken down.

When it comes to choosing a male or female Chihuahua there are very few differences in their personalities.

Both sexes of Chihuahua are friendly, happy, loyal, and playful, making good pets.

Regardless of your choice, you will find both sexes make fantastic companions.

Remember to keep these last few tips in mind when selecting your breeder:

1. The breeder should have extensive knowledge about the dog, and be able to tell you why they have an interest in breeding.
2. Is breeding in order to preserve the health and welfare of the dog
3. Is willing, and able to answer any questions you may have
4. Will take the time to ask **you** lots of questions
5. Can provide you with the pedigree of the dog you are choosing, and answer why this specific pairing of dam and sire was their particular choice.
6. Will show you the mother or any of the other dogs or animals they have, which should all be in full health and be happy.
7. Is willing to take the dog back if you find you don't want it or can't keep it.
8. Does not breed more than two types of breeds, and does not breed from one individual dog too frequently.



Chihuahua's and Your Family

Chihuahua's are known as a saucy yet loveable dog, and nothing pleases them more than to be with their owner. They crave companionship, and are therefore easy to treat as a member of the family, with the proper training.

In order for a Chihuahua to be happy, all they need is love, attention and a bit of exercise, which means that they can adapt to just about any environment as long as there are people around for them to play and interact with, making them fantastic dogs for small spaces like apartments.

Chihuahua's hate to be alone; their natural instinct is to be with their families. Sometimes, this cannot be done. If it can, however, you need to bring your Chihuahua along for the ride. All they want to do is spend time with you. Whether you're driving to the bank, going next door, or just walking to the mail box, your dog wants to trot at your side. If it is possible, bring your Chihuahua along. You'll please him and have yourself some excellent company.

The Chihuahua endearing nature would never want to displease his owner; these dogs *love to love*. But, circumstances happen and your dog will, eventually, do something wrong. This calls for discipline--however, discipline and physical abuse are not of the same entity. Never ever, ever, EVER hit your Chihuahua for any reason, not only do you risk causing serious injury to your dog, but the Chihuahua is known to have a soft spot on the top of their head, due to the fact that their skull never fully closes. Therefore, a blow to the head could kill a Chihuahua. Thus, when it comes to disciplining your Chihuahua, a strong, verbal reprimand will be enough for him to understand you mean business.

As you train and teach your Chihuahua, you and your dog will become fonder of one another and gain an understanding and friendship, providing you with an additional member of the family who wants nothing more than to be loved and spend time with all of you.

Chihuahua's and Kids

Chihuahua's are not very fond of children, especially those younger than 10. However, if you train your Chihuahua, and ensure that your child understands exactly how to handle a Chihuahua by respecting his space, then there is no reason why your child and the Chihuahua can not get along, and will most likely love to play together. Remember, just as your dog must be *taught* how to play gently with children, your children should be *taught* to understand how to play with the dog.

Generally, it is not a good idea to leave children alone with a Chihuahua, as it

won't take long for the Chihuahua to snap at the child or become startled. Not only that, but you won't want to take the chance of your Chihuahua becoming injured by accident should your child play too roughly.

It is also a good idea to keep your Chihuahua and child separate when it comes to snack or eating time, as there is a good chance the dog will snatch the food from the child, which is not something you will want your Chihuahua to learn.

And although there is a time for playing, there is also a time when your Chihuahua needs his space from children. If your dog is seeking some "alone" time, identify a room in your house, or use a proper sized dog crate inside of which he can seek sanctuary, and explain to your child that when he is in his own special place, it's time for them to let the dog rest.

As long as you teach your kids and the dog to respect each others' space and learn how to play with one another, you will discover that your Chihuahua and your kids will love growing, playing and spending time together.

Chihuahua's and Other House Pets

Chihuahua's do not usually get along well with other household pets, unless they have grown up with them, have been trained effectively, or it is another of their breed. That being the case, if you are interested in owning more than one dog, speak to a professional Chihuahua breeder about your wishes and find out your options before investing in more animals. After all, your goal should be to keep your Chihuahua and the other possible animal's best interests in mind.



Chihuahua Dog Expenses

If you're thinking of getting a Chihuahua, be sure to budget for more than just the adoption fee or pet-store cost of your new pet. From supplies, to health care, to regular monthly expenses, you should have the whole picture of dog expenses in mind when you make this decision.

That's not to say you need to be a millionaire. Truth is, most people who want a Chihuahua can make it fit their budget and lifestyle. But by thinking ahead about what you'll need money for and by researching those costs, you can make a better informed decision when choosing your dog.

Naturally, costs vary from place to place and from person to person. Some people might want all the latest gadgets and conveniences; others just want the basics. We can't tell you exactly how much a Chihuahua will cost you when all is said and done, but we can tell you a few things you'll need so you can research costs in your area yourself.

Start-up costs

Here is a checklist of the start-up costs and items most often needed by new Chihuahua owners. You should have these necessities on hand before you bring your dog home.

- The cost of your Chihuahua dog, which will vary depending on whether you obtain him from a pet store, a breeder or from a Humane Society or rescue group
- Vaccinations and first veterinarian visit – If you're getting an adult Chihuahua, these costs may be less, but you should go in for an initial check-up
- Collar – a non-tightening collar is perfect for puppies
- Leash - two of different lengths, long and short
- Food and water bowls - stainless steel or ceramic are best as bacteria can thrive on plastic bowls
- Grooming supplies - including brush, nail clippers, shampoo
- Cleaning supplies - your puppy or dog may have some accidents at first

- Dog bed or blanket – Choose between a nest or pillow bed
- Crate
- A supply of quality food
- Chew toys
- Dog tags
- Dog training classes – recommended for puppies or dogs that need additional training
- Spaying or neutering, if not done already
- Ongoing Expenses

Every month, you will need to budget for food. It's worth mentioning that, obviously, large dogs eat a lot of food.

Veterinarian visits

Chihuahua puppies may need up to 6 or more visits their first year; ask your veterinarian for an estimate of costs. Adult Chihuahua's should have an annual checkup unless your veterinarian suggests more.

It's a good idea to have a little money available for emergencies. Like people, dogs can have accidents and illnesses that may require a hospital visit.

Other Possible Expenses

Other items

There are also some optional supplies you might want to consider. These may be necessities in some cases - for example, a dog house is needed if your dog won't be sleeping inside - but you'll have to decide which of these items fit your lifestyle and budget.

- Fence
- Outside kennel
- Dog house
- Doggie door

- Gates - to block off certain rooms or staircases indoors
- Anti-chew spray
- Clothing
- Boots - an option for dogs in snowy areas or who are going to do a lot of walking over rough ground
- Grooming table

More on dog houses

Chihuahua's can be happy indoors or outdoors with you. However, on the whole a Chihuahua is not a breed that should be left outside by themselves, as he or she seeks constant companionship, and will only be happy outdoors with you. That being the case, if you will be spending a lot of time outdoors, gardening or for other purposes, you may wish to obtain a dog house so that your Chihuahua can retire inside it should he become too hot, or wishes to sleep. Here are some facts you should take into consideration about dog houses.

Chihuahua's are den animals. They like a small, confined, safe spot for naps and hanging out. Various designs are available or you can build your own.

Make it big enough for your Chihuahua, but not too big because heat escapes in a large space. Buy or build one that will be big enough for your grown dog, but while your puppy is growing, block off the extra space with boxes or a sheet of wood. Keep the occupied space appropriate for your dog's size.

Insulate against both the heat and the cold. The shelter of a roof and walls will protect your Chihuahua from the wind and sun, but use flaps for airflow in the summer and some kind of insulation against the cold air.

Set or build it off the ground. Raising the doghouse even a few inches will block the cold air rising from the earth and will give added airflow in the hot months. It also helps prevent rotting and keeps water from seeping in.

With a little research, you should be able to find a way to make these expenses fit your needs. And if you have this planning out of the way before you get your Chihuahua, you'll have more worry-free time to enjoy spending with the newest member of your family.



Chihuahua Beds

When it comes to comfort, nothing will make your Chihuahua happier than having their very own dog bed that they can relax, sleep on and enjoy.

There are three basic styles of dog beds that you can consider, and can be found at local pet stores and online:

1. Nest Beds
2. Pillows
3. Specialty Beds (special shaped, orthopedic, thermal, bolster etc.)

If you are interested in purchasing a bed for your Chihuahua, you will need to make sure that you select a bed that is an extra small size. Extra small size nest beds are 16" by 21", while pillows are 30" to 36". As for specialty beds, these beds will vary depending on their shape and size.

When selecting the bed for your Chihuahua it is a good idea to purchase ones that are durable, made of good quality and are machine washable. You will find they come in a variety of colors and patterns, so it shouldn't be hard to pick out the bed that should suit both you and your Chihuahua.

One owner said - "My Chihuahua loves his Bolster bed. It's the perfect size, and is his very own mini floor couch that gives him ideal comfort. It's his favorite resting spot, and was worth every penny."



Clothing Your Chihuahua

It may not have occurred to you, but your Chihuahua pal needs a coat, sweater and even boots, not only so you can squeal about how cute he looks, but also to help keep his body and paws dry, warm and free from dirt. That is why putting your Chihuahua into dog clothes has both practical and fashionable advantages.

However, it's not uncommon for many owners to feel that clothing their dog is foolish. After all, they have survived this long without wearing clothes, right? So why start now? Thus, this leaves owners wondering if dog clothing is really necessary, and if they choose not to cloth them, are they putting their dog at risk?

Despite what you may believe, dog clothing serves a purpose other than fashion, and is something you need to seriously consider. Therefore, although it is not imperative to clothe your dog from head to toe, it is important to keep your dog

comfortable, happy and safe, according to the climate, location and lifestyle they live in. This also means for all you fashion lovers, knowing when not to put clothes on your dog when the weather is hot. No matter how cute your Chihuahua may look, when it's warm, leave him in his birthday suit!

Providing your pet with dog clothing has several practical applications. For instance, if you live in a cold climate, your Chihuahua does not have a natural warm coat like the Siberian Husky has to keep him warm, and a dog coat will help to keep him toasty when the temperature dips. You can also give your Chihuahua the added warmth of a hand-knit sweater.

Furthermore, dog clothes can also keep their fur from getting dirty or matted while they are at play, while rain boots and hats will keep your pet dry and cozy during a winter walk in the rain. Each of these items works to keep your pet safe from extreme conditions!

All dogs can benefit from wearing dog coats, depending on the weather conditions. Water proof coats can protect your pet from the wind and rain and stop fur becoming matted, especially if your dog likes to roll in the mud.

Think of it this way, on freezing cold days, it's as essential to put a coat on your Chihuahua as it is to remember to put on your own coat when you take him for a walk.

Now, let's take a further look at the previously mentioned most common and practical dog clothing articles:

- Coats
- Sweaters
- Boots

An individual look at the above attire will help you decide which items you believe would be best suited to your dog's needs, as well as your own personal taste.

Dog Coats

People tend to love or hate dog jackets. They are made for dogs both large and small for fashion as well as sensible purposes.

If your dog likes to rummage through bracken and thorns or other rough undergrowth then dog jackets stop injury. They also prevent his coat becoming matted by rolling in mud or pushing through hedges.

Most coats will provide some warmth and prevent chill if walking in the rain. Dogs don't really enjoy the rain and wearing a coat can make a real difference.

Bright dog coats also make it easy to stop your puppy at a distance on a country walk or amongst the other dogs in the park. If you walk your dog at night then reflective dog coats are a real safety feature.

So, dog coats have many practical uses but it is as a fashion statement that many owners choose a dog coat for their pet.

There is nothing more chic than a well groomed dog walking nicely on a lead in the street wearing the latest in stylish coats. They come in a number of materials from waxed (for the country look) to the finest embroidered (for that very special occasion). The choice is up to you.

How to Introduce Your Chihuahua to a Dog Coat

Proper fit is key for getting your dog to accept donning a coat. However, ease of getting the garment on and off is a learned behavior for both you and your dog. Start by putting the coat on and rewarding the dog with verbal praise. Leave the item on for only a short period. The next time, try leaving the garment on for a longer period of time, again praising and rewarding your pet. It is best to start this training as a puppy, but older dogs can also easily be trained to wear dog coats with a little more patience on your part.

How to Accurately Measure your dog

For most coats, measuring should be done along the dog's backbone from the base of the head to the base of the tail, which is referred to as the "top line measurement". This is from the base of where the collar rests to where the tail is attached. Most dog coat manufacturers use this measurement for their wears. However, it's important that the dog's girth be taken into account as well as the top line measurement.

For chest measurement, measure the chest at its widest point, which is typically right behind the front legs. If the dog has a large girth, going up a size in the top line measurement is always a smart choice, since some additional fabric will be used up.

Remember that there are different sizing ranges for different types of garments, due to how binding or flexible the material used is.

Dog Sweaters

Sweaters are the most popular type of clothing for dogs. They are available in a variety of different styles, in sizes to fit any breed, from Chihuahuas to German Shepherds. Dog jumpers are both practical and visually appealing, making them great wardrobe starters for your dog, as dogs generally have an easier time adapting to a sweater than they do a coat.

Sweaters for dogs are often handmade with quality hand-dyed yarns, chenille, and angora. Look for quality accents, such as fur trimmings, belts, and hoods. Some sweaters will have a variety of color choices; others are designed with a single color choice.

Purchasing sweaters for dogs

Buying a sweater for your dog is no so different from buying sweaters for yourself. Dog fashions change with the seasons, just like the clothes we buy. Pastels are in fashion for spring, just as woolly blends are popular for fall and dark jewel tones predominate during winter. Just like people, dogs have certain colors and styles that flatter them more than others.

It's easy to select dog clothes that will reflect your dog's personality too, making the combination virtually impossible to resist. For example, if you have a girl named Princess who loves to be the center of attention, pink dog sweaters would be the best choice for her. Or, you may have a boy called Butch so a stars and stripes sweater may be suitable.

In addition to this, dog sweaters are also themed for major holidays, sports teams, TV programs and movies, making them perfect to give as gifts, and adding some fun to doggy fashions.

Dog Boots

Putting dog paw protection on your pet is not as silly as you may think. Imagine if you take your dog on rough terrain, by putting boots on his paws, you can really prevent injury from occurring. Plus, if your pet does pick up a cut to his foot pad then boots make walking more comfortable, will stop gnawing and keep the wound clean.

Dog paw protection: Three main benefits to your pet wearing booties –

1. Protects his feet and legs from: burs and thorns, cold weather, harsh terrain, hot asphalt, moisture, snow, mud and ice.
2. Absorbs shock and cushions blows to the leg.
3. Insulates and warms a substantial portion of the feet, joints and muscles of the leg.

Lessons for active dog owners

If you take your dog on long walks, runs or cycle rides, then dog booties really do help. Hear is a tale that proves this point.

Our dog loves to come on cycle rides but at the beginning of summer his paws are "relatively" soft. A couple of years ago we went on a 15 mile ride which we all enjoyed, including Barney (the Labrador Retriever). Towards the end he started limping and when we looked at his paw had a blister on two pads which had burst. Not only did we feel very, very guilty but, had to suffer the embarrassment of taking him to the vet for a precautionary check up. We were astounded to learn that Barney was the fourth patient with these symptoms that week. This problem is very common. The vet's solution - Wearing dog boots!

As you can see, getting your dog or puppy to wear dog boots in the great outdoors really will help save your dog from injury.

When it comes down to it, clothing for dogs is a great opportunity to showcase the individuality of your pet. Even if you prefer a no fuss approach to fashion, there are plenty of dog clothing options.

Of course, if you are the owner who wants your Chihuahua dressed with pristine fashion sense, other dog apparel that you may be interested in includes:

- Hats
- Umbrellas
- Bows
- Scarfs

Nevertheless, whether you want to keep it simple with an understated dark sweater that will get the job done, or jaunty boots and personalized sweaters for the dog who has everything, there is something to satisfy the style of every owner.

Choosing dog clothes for your pet should be a fun and rewarding experience. Your dog is a part of your family and many pet owners give their dog's birthday and Christmas gifts. Luxury dog apparel is just one more way to show how much you value the companionship of man's best friend.



ID Tags And Registration

Nobody wants to think about losing his or her **Chihuahua**. But, unfortunately, dogs do get lost. Be prepared. Buy your **Chihuahua** a collar and some form of identification.

Identification tags are a popular and easy way to identify your **Chihuahua**. There are abundant options in colors, shapes, and sizes to fit your dog's needs and

personality.

The problem with tags is that they can fall off or be removed. Two permanent methods are the microchip and the tattoo.

Microchips

Contained in a capsule, the microchip is a small chip coded with your contact information or an ID number. About the size of a grain of rice, it's injected under your pet's skin with a needle, a procedure no more uncomfortable than a regular shot.

Your information is then put into a national database so if your puppy is lost, identification is easy. Lost pets may be taken to the humane society or animal shelter for scanning identification. It's not as easy as reading a tag on a collar, but it cannot be lost. It's safe, effective, and meets international standards. Check with your local animal shelter or veterinarian for costs and more information.

It's important to keep your contact information current. When you move or change phone numbers, update your registration data.

The only drawbacks to these chips are that not every place has the scanner equipment and the chip may move (harmlessly) around your Chihuahua's body, making it difficult to scan.

Tattoos

A tattoo contains a number that you register with one of the national databases. It can be put on your Chihuahua's inner thigh or earflap. Wait until your dog is fully-grown so the numbers won't grow out of shape. Be sure to tattoo on an area that won't be covered by fur as your Chihuahua's coat matures. It's a simple and quick procedure, but check it periodically for fading. Don't forget to register the number and to keep the contact information current.



Dog Proofing Your Home

Before bringing your Chihuahua dog home, you'll need to 'dogproof' your house. Here's a simple checklist to make sure your home is safe before letting your dog run free.

Make sure all poisonous household items are securely stored out of reach

Put household cleaners, laundry detergents, bleach, disinfectants, insecticides, cleaning fluid, fertilizers, mothballs, antifreeze, insect poisons, rat poisons and other items in cabinets or on high shelves. Read about Home Safety.

Check your plants

Many plants in and around your house can be harmful to your **Chihuahua**. Did you know that the pits of apricots and peaches, as well as spinach and tomato vines, can make your dog sick and, in large dosages, can even be fatal? Read about Poisonous Plants. You will find a list in "The Dog Lover Guide".

Look at your house from your Chihuahua's point of view

Get down on all fours and look around. Move or remove dangling electric cords, loose nails, plastic bags or other tempting objects that will be in reach.

Pick up buttons, string, sewing needles, pins and other sharp objects, and anything small enough to swallow

If your Chihuahua swallows any of these objects, they may cause damage to the mouth and internal organs. String and other entangling objects, such as curtain pulls, six-pack holders and the like may cause abrasions or strangulation.

Unplug, remove or cover any electrical cords in your dog's confinement area

Chewing on these cords can cause severe mouth burns, electrocution and fires.

Close off balconies, upper porches and high decks

Chihuahua Puppies in particular are so little that they can slip through openings and fall.

In the last few days before arrival, give your house a good cleaning and remove breakable items from areas where your dog will be. Also, spend some time

preparing yourself or your family. Small children need to know how to act around puppies and dogs.



Home Safety

To a curious and creative Chihuahua, anything can be a potential toy, treat or prize. But there are many things in the home that can be harmful to your dog. Learning to identify and remove those things from your dog's reach is an important part of creating a safe home for your Chihuahua.

Potential Hazard – Cleaners: Includes household cleaners, bleach, detergents, dryer sheets, soap and more. All of these can have varying levels of toxicity or may burn if touched or consumed.

What You Can Do – Keep all cleaners sealed in their bottles. Store the bottles out of reach or in a latched cabinet. Remember, some dogs can open normal cabinets.

Potential Hazard – Chemicals: Includes automotive fluids, ESPECIALLY antifreeze (which is highly toxic yet very sweet), fertilizers, weed killers, moth balls, oven cleaners and more. These are often extremely toxic.

What You Can Do – Keep any household or automotive chemicals locked away in cabinets or storage areas. If these chemicals are in the garage, don't leave your dog in the garage unsupervised.

Potential Hazard - Foil, Plastic Wrap and Insulation: Materials like these often have tempting food particles or grease on them, but shred quickly and are easily swallowed. Any of these materials can cause serious internal problems, especially insulation, which is often made with fiberglass.

What You Can Do – Don't leave foil, wrap, insulation or similar materials lying around the house. If you use foil or wrap in the kitchen, throw it away someplace your dog cannot reach. If installing insulation or doing construction, clean up all scraps.

Potential Hazard – Pest Control: Bug traps, rodent traps, foggers, insecticides – even your dog's own flea medicine. All of these are designed to kill or trap, and can cause harm to your dog. Insect traps are often sweet, which is an extra temptation.

What You Can Do – Store these items in a locked or latched cabinet. If you have to leave insect traps out, make sure they're in places your dog can't get at them.

Potential Hazard – Drugs: Whether over the counter or prescription, or even your dog's own prescriptions, drugs can cause serious problems in the case of an overdose. And don't assume that 'mild' drugs are OK – even aspirin can cause serious problems.

What You Can Do – Keep all medications in sealed containers away from your dog's reach. NEVER self-medicate your dog. Only give drugs to your dog as instructed by a veterinarian.

Potential Hazard – Chocolate: This sweet treat can be toxic even in relatively small amounts. A half-ounce of baking chocolate or less per pound of dog can be toxic.

What You Can Do – Don't give your dog chocolate. Keep it out of reach, and don't leave it out where your dog can reach it.

Potential Hazard – Plants: Many household plants are bad for dogs and can cause problems ranging from stomach upsets to much more serious consequences. For a list, see our information on Poisonous Plants.

What You Can Do – Review the list of poisonous plants and make sure none of those plants are in places where your dog can reach them. Supervise your dog when you introduce a new plant to make sure your dog isn't tempted to take a bite.

Potential Hazard – Wires: While they seem like fun toys, wires that carry a current can electrocute a dog if chewed. Even non-connected wires are troublesome – if swallowed, they can cause internal damage.

What You Can Do – Keep cords for lamps and other devices as short as possible. If you have to use extension cords, tack them to the baseboard so they're harder to chew.

Potential Hazard – Sharp Objects: Knives, forks, paper clips and sharp bits of plastic are among the hazards often found in the house. They can be swallowed and cause unseen harm, or a romping dog could suffer cuts or punctures.

What You Can Do – Keep these items away from you dog. If you see your dog chewing such an item, get it out of his mouth immediately.

Potential Hazard – Universal Dangers: There are, of course, many other dangers that apply to humans as well as dogs. Falls, carbon monoxide poisoning, lead paint – if it can harm a person, it most likely can harm a dog.

What You Can Do – Keep your house as safe as you would for a child. And

remember – dogs won't grow up and learn not to do certain things. Keeping a safe home is a lifelong commitment.



First Aid

Accidents happen. When one happens to your dog, you may need to perform some first aid to stabilize or comfort your pet until you can get to professional help. Remember, first aid should not be the only aid your Chihuahua receives.

In an emergency

In an emergency, keep a level head and get your dog to the veterinarian quickly. Call first. If your doctor's office is not open, call the nearest emergency pet clinic. Keep emergency phone numbers near your telephone.

Some quick tips on common injuries and issues:

General Injuries: Wrap your dog in a heavy towel or blanket to keep him warm and restrict his movements.

Not Breathing: Unless you have been trained to administer CPR, it is best and safest to seek immediate veterinary care. (If you want to learn pet CPR, ask your veterinarian to recommend a program in your area.)

Bleeding: Apply a pressure bandage (sterile gauze or a handkerchief) to stem or stop bleeding.

Burn: Apply a cold compress to a burn and gently hold it there until you get to the clinic.

Poison: Call your veterinarian or poison control immediately to determine if vomiting should be induced.

Choking: At any sign of choking (drooling, difficulty swallowing, pawing at the mouth, gagging) don't attempt to remove the item.

Heatstroke: Take your dog to a cool spot and sponge him with cold water. Encourage him to drink small amounts of water.

Frostbite: Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws and ear tips so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Fever: Check your dog's temperature. If it's above 103° degrees, get to your veterinarian for medication or advice. Read about taking your dog's temperature

In ALL Cases: It's worth repeating: Get to your veterinarian. Even small cuts can become big problems due to infection, and there can be internal injuries you can't see and your dog can't tell you about.

First aid kit

Having some supplies ready in case of an emergency is a good idea. You won't have to go searching for what you need at a time of crisis. There's no need to replicate a veterinary hospital, but these basic items will come in helpful.

- Antibiotic ointment for cuts and scrapes
- A rectal thermometer – your dog's separate from everyone else's
- Tweezers – to remove thorns, stingers, splinters
- Wrap-style bandages and padding
- A blanket or large towel to wrap your dog



Your Chihuahua's First Week Home

When you bring home a new Chihuahua dog or puppy, there will need to be some time for adjustment. By following these tips, you can lay the foundation for a long and happy life together and make the transition as easy as possible for everyone involved.

Plan ahead

Make all your purchases ahead of time so you have supplies, food, toys and everything you need ready to go, and have your house ready for your newcomer. Read about items you need to have and how to prepare your home.

Make time

The best time to bring your new Chihuahua home is at the beginning of a weekend. If possible, add a few vacation days. This gives you time to acquaint your dog with its new home and begin housetraining and other training.

Choose a name

Agree on a name ahead of time and make sure everyone uses it all the time when talking to your Chihuahua. This will help him recognize his name and avoid confusion.

See the Veterinarian

As soon as possible, after you acquire your new Chihuahua, take your new pet to your veterinarian. Bring any immunization information you may have received when you acquired your pet to your veterinarian to begin a case history for future reference.

Get everyone on board

Once in his new home, remember that your Chihuahua is adjusting to strange new surroundings and people. Children can become especially excited. Explain to them that their new friend needs time out for naps. Show children how to play nicely.

Be a leader

Simple things like always walking through doors ahead of your Chihuahua and eating in your Chihuahua's presence before you feed him make you look like a

'pack leader.' This will make it easier for your dog to accept that you (and your family) are in charge.

Feed your Chihuahua

It is best to bring home the pet food that your new Chihuahua has been eating to make the transition to a new home as easy as possible. New sights, new environment and all the attention can be very stressful. The only familiar thing may be the food he has been eating. If you plan to switch foods, you can minimize digestive upsets by having enough of the old food available to make the change a gradual one. Place food in the spot where the food dish will be kept to set a routine. If your Chihuahua doesn't seem to be eating, try moistening the food with water to make it easier to eat.

Be fair

Never hit your Chihuahua, remember you could seriously injure or kill him. Never scold for something your puppy did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think that you are mad for no reason. Instead, encourage the behavior you want and prevent the ones you do not. It's a much more productive approach. Learn more about behavior issues and how to address them.

Get out

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gin socializing your Chihuahua puppy as soon as your veterinarian gives the OK. Take him out and gradually introduce him to new people and other dogs in controlled, safe settings. It is one of the most important things you can do for him. It teaches him to be a good citizen and gives him confidence and social skills.

Make introductions

Introduce your new Chihuahua to resident pets in controlled situations – if the resident pet is a dog, perhaps on neutral ground where neither will feel the need to defend territory. Give each pet its own food dish, and give all pets attention to avoid competition.

Do's and don'ts

Avoid bringing home a new Chihuahua during busy times such as birthdays and holidays. The noise and confusion may frighten the pet. Family members are generally too busy with the festivities to devote adequate time to help your dog become comfortable in his new home.

Do make sure your entire family knows how to act, and agree on commands and rules. Complete cooperation of all family members is ideal. When a Chihuahua receives mixed signals, it can become confused and not know what to do.

Do have fun. Chihuahua' of all ages love a good time.



Choosing A Name For Your Chihuahua

Coming up with a name for your new Chihuahua is never easy. Do you keep a family tradition? Bend to the latest fashion? Honor a hero? Or come up with something wacky and altogether new?

A name can say a lot. Take Fido. The name is a classic "dog" name - but why? The name goes back to the Latin "fides" which meant "trustworthiness" or "protection." It's also the root of words like "fidelity" and "confidante."

Some starting points for this discussion can be historical figures, family members, mythical figures, qualities of your Chihuahua (his temperament or coloring), characters from books, film, or television or anything else that you might have an interest in.

Here are a few suggestions:

Keep it simple

One to three syllables is usually about right. Time can be of the essence when you're calling your dog; calling out a complicated name can slow things down and simply become tiresome.

It shouldn't rhyme with your negative words

If you say "No" to your dog, you may want to skip names like Flo or Joe as they can sound a bit too close to "No".

Choose a name you really like

You're going to be saying it for up to the next fifteen years, if you're lucky. So take your time and select something you'll enjoy saying for the next decade or more.

Make it his word

Use his name when you speak to your puppy. Reward him with affection and a kibble or two when he hears it and soon he will come running when he hears his special word.



Socializing Your Chihuahua

Socialization is an ongoing process throughout your Chihuahua's life, but the most critical period is before six months of age. Quite literally, socialization means making your dog sociable.

Socializing your Chihuahua puppy means providing quality time. Give him lots of attention and affection. Pet him and call him by his chosen name. Introduce him to your neighbors and "service people" such as the mail carrier and others who come to your home regularly. Show children how to pet him.

Socializing your puppy to other dogs is important, but this does not mean letting him run free in the neighborhood. Give your puppy the opportunity for safe, controlled interaction with dogs whose owners you know and be sure the dogs are immunized. For a Chihuahua puppy, this includes introducing him in happy ways to all sorts of people, places and things. Here are a few things you can do:

- Go to training classes
- Visit dog-loving friends
- Take your puppy on errands with you in temperate weather. (As always, never leave your dog in the car in warm weather. It can become unbearably hot quickly.)
- Invite people over to your house

Socialization isn't about forcing your puppy into scary situations, but rather about creating pleasant associations with new events and faces. Things to keep in mind:

- What a Chihuahua puppy learns early in life stays with him for life.
- Between one month and three months old, a Chihuahua puppy gets almost all of his adult sensory, motor and learning abilities.
- The more loving interaction you have with your Chihuahua, the better.
- Include a little work in your play times and a lot of play in your work times. Make learning fun!

As soon as your veterinarian says it is safe, introduce him to the sights and sounds of his world. Make this fun by praising him and giving him a kibble when he explores his world.

Grooming

Grooming and handling daily throughout your Chihuahua's life help make him a calmer, better-behaved, more tolerant companion. Make grooming a special time for you and your dog. Whether he needs it or not, brush him daily with much affection and reassurance so he learns to love this time together.

Handling his paws, tail, ears and mouth

When your Chihuahua puppy is tired, gently handle his paws, look in his ears, and open his mouth. Use your finger to gently massage his gums. This prepares him for having his teeth brushed. Praise him warmly when he allows these things. Get him used to all this early and grooming him later in life will be easier.

Feeding

Utilize every opportunity to socialize your Chihuahua puppy. Make feeding time a happy experience by praising your puppy for being a good dog as you place his dish on the floor. Considerable puppy-owner bonding can occur through positive feeding experiences.

Feeding can also aid in training your puppy. As you place his food dish on the floor, give the command, 'Come.' This introduces your puppy to an obedience command in a very positive way.

As you socialize and train your puppy, remember that puppies are eager to please. Reward your puppy for good behavior by praising him. A little praise goes a long way in helping your Chihuahua puppy become an endearing companion.



Chihuahua Dog Intelligence

Chihuahua dog intelligence can be measured several ways: how well or how quickly your dog can understand your meaning, figure out ways around obstacles or recognize people and things. But intelligence should not be confused with being a good companion. Smart does not always equal trainable. A smart Chihuahua might very well understand you but still choose to do something else.

The important quality of a companion dog is that he wants to please you. After all, most basic training involves conditioning your Chihuahua to listen to a command, but doesn't require that your dog 'understand' the command in the way a person does.

Some signs of intelligence are easy to spot. For example, watch how your Chihuahua uses his paws. Using paws to reach for or retrieve a ball that has rolled under a couch is one sign of intelligence.

One popular test is to show your Chihuahua a new toy, then set it on the floor and cover it with a towel. Chihuahua's of above-average intelligence will make the connection between the towel and the toy and look for their toy. Other Chihuahua's will think the toy simply disappeared and never look for it.

Evidence of memory can be seen in how your Chihuahua greets people he has met before. A Chihuahua with a stronger memory will not need to go back through the introduction process and will become comfortable with the visitor quickly.

Wherever your Chihuahua falls on the intelligence scale, remember that intelligence is developed through practice, just as it can be in humans. The more involved your Chihuahua is in your life, the more time you spend training and working with your dog, the more intelligent he's likely to be.

And regardless of intelligence, the important thing to know is that your Chihuahua wants to please you. Unless you really need or want a dog that can figure out how to open the refrigerator, intelligence can be overrated. For most families, the qualities to look for are happy, tolerant and devoted - those are what make a family dog one-in-a-million.



Understanding Chihuahua Puppies

Your Chihuahua puppy is a pack animal, and he still follows the call of the wild. Your family is your puppy's pack. Who will be the leader and who will be the follower?

There are some ways to set yourself and your family up as top dog. You want to earn your puppy's respect. That can mean being firm, but always fair.

Chihuahua puppies can feel fear, but it's not useful for your dog to fear you.

Never hit your dog

Chihuahua puppies don't have the ability to link cause and effect abstractly; that is, remember a past action and link it to your present reaction. Never scold for something your puppy did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think that you are mad for no reason. Only correct your Chihuahua when caught in the act.

Because Chihuahua puppies are pack animals, they crave your attention and approval. Use this to your advantage when teaching your Chihuahua.

Take the time to teach your Chihuahua puppy what you want. A puppy arrives in our world, often having just been born two or three months earlier. We should not expect him to understand anything but to love us. We get to teach him the rest - using persistence, patience and affection to shape him into the companions that we want and he is capable of becoming.

Your Chihuahua puppy's senses

When you notice the way your Chihuahua puppy reacts in situations, remember that Chihuahuas live in a world that looks, smells and sounds quite a bit different than ours. You might think a situation seems quiet and safe, but your Chihuahua may sense something you do not that causes agitation - a sound too high-pitched for you to hear or the scent of another animal you can't detect.

Chihuahuas can see with less light, detect motion, and see flickering light better than humans, but the clarity of their distance vision is typically poorer. The popular theory that dogs only see shades of gray may not be true. Some theories suggest they see blues and yellows but can't see reds and greens as humans do.

A Chihuahua's hearing is more sensitive than yours. They hear higher pitches and lower volumes. Chihuahuas are able to register sounds of 35,000 vibrations per second compared with 20,000 per second in humans. This sensitive hearing

can alert you to visitors or danger, but it also means you should take care with loud noises, and be patient when your Chihuahua howls at a train whistle or siren.

A Chihuahua puppy's sense of smell is much more acute than a human's - tens of thousands of times more acute by some estimations.

We'll never fully understand what their world looks like, smells like or sounds like, just as Chihuahua dogs will never even be able to understand how different our world is. But we both understand one thing: affection. Kindness crosses all barriers and lessens all differences.



Schedules For Your Chihuahua Dog

Because Chihuahua's are creatures of habit, schedules are very important. You need to schedule when to feed, water, exercise and take your dog outdoors to eliminate.

Why schedule?

For one thing, schedules will make your Chihuahua happy. Knowing what will happen and when it will happen gives your dog a sense of security. Also, schedules make it easier to train and control your Chihuahua. Housetraining in particular is generally easier with a schedule, supervision and encouragement.

Scheduling food and water

Feed your Chihuahua at the same time every day, whether you feed your dog once a day or more often. After 15 minutes, take away any uneaten food. Water should always be available.

If you know when your Chihuahua ate and drank you will have a pretty good idea when he will need to go outside. You will also be training his digestive system as well, which will help take some of the guesswork out of housetraining.

Scheduling elimination

Remember preventive training - it's always best to think ahead. Take your Chihuahua outside when you think he might have to eliminate, rather than wait too long and run the risk of an accident indoors. The more times your Chihuahua eliminates outdoors where you want him to, the slimmer the chance for him to have an accident indoors. The clearer the picture to your dog, the quicker he will catch on to what you want. Chihuahua's really want to please you and you can show them how to do it.

Always accompany your new Chihuahua outdoors. That way, you can take him to a pre-selected area in your yard to eliminate, therefore doing away with the habit of smelling the whole yard to find the desired area. You will also be assured that your Chihuahua has eliminated before bringing him indoors, and you can praise him.

Elimination schedules for Chihuahua puppies

Chihuahua puppies need to go out frequently. At eight weeks old, a trip outside every two to three hours during the day is suggested. By four months that can be about every four to five hours. Most puppies can make it through the night by four months of age or a bit older. By nine months or so, most Chihuahua's can get by

on three or four trips outside a day, though more are always appreciated. As your Chihuahua gets into its senior years, these trips will need to be increased again.

Scheduling exercise and play

Exercise is important for all Chihuahua's. Many adult Chihuahua's are either overweight or likely to get that way due to diet and lack of an exercise program. Lack of exercise can cause Chihuahua's to exhibit destructive chewing behavior because they become bored or are trying to burn off excess energy. Taking your dog for a 15-20 minute walk can help socialize him, give you a chance to bond while doing something together, and is a great way for you to get some exercise, too.



Chihuahua's and Discipline

Most would agree that the day you bring the Chihuahua puppy home, you already need to have the direction picked out in which you want to go with him.

Even though your Chihuahua is a small dog, and you can pick him up to keep him out of trouble, it's just as important to train and discipline your Chihuahua as it is any larger dog. That way, you and your Chihuahua will be comfortable with where you stand in your living situation. Your dog will know that you're the "alpha male" of your "pack" and will be happy to oblige when he understands what you want him to do. It will also make your life much easier when you can communicate your wishes and know that they'll be understood.

Disciplining one is a matter of thinking and working a step ahead of your Chihuahua. Do it with love and gentleness, but firmness as well.

You also need to keep in mind that a Chihuahua that is well behaved today, may not remain so forever. Your dog's behavior constantly changes; new problems can always develop, and existing ones could get worse. So make the discipline constant.

Training your Chihuahua is the most important thing you will do for him and for yourself, because it allows your Chihuahua to have a much better social relationship with other family members or friends.

A trained Chihuahua will listen, and can safely be allowed freedom more than an untrained one.

A disciplined and well-trained Chihuahua is more confident and makes a wonderful companion that is smart, socially acceptable, loving and blessed with boundless energy - in short, a pleasure to live with.

A poorly trained dog can be a loud, rambunctious, and a destructive nuisance around the house that weighs on you more like a commitment and responsibility rather than a blessing.

Teach Them Young

The trick, just like teaching children, is to teach your Chihuahua while he is still young. At this point in their lives, Chihuahuas don't know any better, so don't wait to begin stressing them out when they are older and more difficult to control.

It is not fair to allow your Chihuahua to pull on the leash when he is a small puppy, only to scold and shout at him if he does the same when he is an adult. It

is not fair on your dog and certainly not fair on you.

Start the training in a place that is familiar to your Chihuahua, and where there is minimal distraction.

Remember that socialization is also an important part of the training, because you don't want to end up with a shy or aggressive Chihuahua.

After both of you are skilled at several obedience commands, start taking him to different areas for practice, where there are increasing amounts of distractions present. Examples include areas near a supermarket, school and a busy park on Sundays. You may find that it seems as if you are starting all over again, but you'll have a superbly trained dog at the end of it. So it's worth the effort.

Keep in Mind that Chihuahua's are Intelligent

Being an intelligent dog has its own advantages and drawbacks.

They are quick to learn.

It also means Chihuahua can have a mind of their own, and may sometimes appear stubborn or too smart for their own good. Though they are a clever breed, they can be difficult to housebreak if your training and discipline are not consistent.

Understand how to train your Chihuahua, and familiarize yourself with the way they respond to your training. Not every Chihuahua will be the same; just like people, each dog has its own personality and level of comprehension. This means while some Chihuahua may be quick to catch on, it may take others more training sessions in order for them to catch on.

As owners, you must maintain respect for you dog while training. Respect goes both ways.

Respect their intelligence. Love them. Set the rules for behavior. Trust them. There is no need for extreme measures to show Chihuahua that you are the top dog.

Handle any slow learning skills with patience and encouragement - don't give up on their training.

Utilize Their High Play Drive

Utilize their high play drive for more effective obedience training.

Conduct "play training" where by the training tasks are made into fun games and

the Chihuahua's high play drive is used as motivation. There are a lot of really good books available on this type of training.

While training your Chihuahua, you have to make him WANT to do what you want. You can't expect your dog to willingly want to participate unless it is FUN or interesting. Otherwise, you are wasting both your time and his.

Your goal is to make training your Chihuahua's favorite activity.

Chihuahua's LOVE to play! You will have the happiest Chihuahua in the world and most obedient if you will just spend some time, giving them your undivided attention everyday. Otherwise they feel ignored, bored and will tear or chew things up and will not listen to you.

Some tried and proven tactics you can use to make your Chihuahua listen to you more.

- * When playing with your Chihuahua puppy, play at his level.

If play is encouraged at ground level, this builds your role as the dominant or top dog when you are standing and training your puppy. If the puppy is allowed to jump up and initiate play, this can lead to unwanted jumping up as the Chihuahua gets older.

- * From the very beginning, make sure your Chihuahua knows you are the master.

However, it suffices to teach your Chihuahua to obey simple commands of raising a paw in a handshake, giving a hand lick for a kiss or doing a roll over to show his submission to you. Most Chihuahua's love performing these simple tricks (obedience commands) for you.

There is no need for extreme measures to prove you are the boss. Obedience training should be fun and rewarding for you and your Chihuahua.

- * Once it is established you are the boss, one owner declared: "Life with your Chihuahua will be just kidney bean dancin' all the way!" Another reported: "My Chihuahua only wanted to play at obedience class until I got serious and showed him I was the boss."

- * The Chihuahua must always eat after you do.

This is the easiest way to show to your Chihuahua who is the boss. But this is easier said than done when there are many people in the family, and not everyone respects the rule.

- * Very active young Chihuahua's have short attention span.

It is best to have many short 5 to 10-minute lessons than a single, long 30-minute lesson. Keep the training session short and sweet. Lengthy session easily becomes dull, boring and tedious for both you and the Chihuahua.

- * Start the training at quiet places familiar to your Chihuahua with very few things and people around to distract him.

Gradually move the training to places with more and more distractions so he will learn to obey your commands despite the distractions.

- * Speak to your Chihuahua strongly but not in an angry voice.

Be kind but be firm while training, and never give in to what they want. It may seem cruel but in the long run you will have a much better relationship you're your Chihuahua.

- * Celebrate after every training session for a good job done.

Have a big play by running and throwing his favorite toys. If you give them a lot of playtime with yourself they'd listen to you more.

- * Use only one word like "sit," "down," "drop" and "stay" when teaching your Chihuahua commands. For example, when your Chihuahua gets on the lounge with you, say "sit - down" and he should sit then lay down on your lap.

- * To keep a Chihuahua from charging the front door, put up a door/gate that he can't see through or hop over.

Have him wait till people enter and come up the stairs then he gets a treat. This particular owner noticed that even when the gate is left open the Chihuahua will not usually go by unless they see a cat, or other dog!

- * Finally, no matter how well trained you think your Chihuahua is, he has an attention span of only seconds!

Don't let him run away, because he'll just keep going and going. Always keep him leashed outdoors if not in a fenced area. He can run faster than you, and you will not catch him if he runs for the road.



Becoming A Pack Leader

There is no equality in dogdom. You're either ahead or behind your Chihuahua in line, and that is decided by how you interact with your dog. Being a good leader means being calm, kind and consistent. Here are a few suggestions:

Teach your Chihuahua to control his mouth. If he mouths or nips you, react with a startling "No biting!" This will teach him that you are not another puppy and he needs to treat you differently.

Have him 'sit' or 'down' before you give him anything he wants, from petting to tossing a toy. When he responds to you before you respond to him, he will start to look to you to set the rules, while at the same time getting in daily training practice.

Practice submission exercises daily. These include holding him in your arms or on his side and speaking to him gently until he stops squirming. When he stops, release him, praise and give him a kibble of food. Gently handle his ears, mouth and paws so he learns to accept this. These exercises are easy with most Chihuahua's but if your dog really struggles or gets upset, seek assistance from a qualified dog professional.

Use tone of voice to communicate. A higher than normal pitch is exciting and playful and perfect for praise. A normal tone - direct and confident - is your command tone. A lowered voice your Chihuahua hears as a warning, like a growl. With practice, your puppy can learn to understand your mood through your tone of voice.

When you get home, you and your family should eat in your Chihuahua's presence before setting out the dog food. Among dogs, the most important dogs always eat first.

Walk through doors first.

Remember: Pack leaders NEVER share their food with other dogs. If you follow all of the steps above and then give your dog table scraps and bites of your sandwich you are sending mixed signals to your Chihuahua.

If you do these things consistently, you can elevate yourself in your Chihuahua's eyes, which can make all the difference in training.



Housebreaking Your Chihuahua Puppy

Whilst housebreaking your Chihuahua puppy may not be a priority in choosing a new dog, it usually springs to the top once the little chap gets home! I am often surprised at the number of people who find house training puppies so hard.

When you bring a new Chihuahua dog or puppy home, you should move to establish a routine as soon as possible. The faster you get things on track, the fewer mistakes you'll have to clean up. Although there are different strategies and ways of housetraining a puppy or dog, the following instructions are a good way to teach your pet to eliminate outdoors.

House training step by step

House training can take different amounts of time for different Chihuahua. But by applying schedules, setting boundaries for where elimination is acceptable, a verbal command, praise and crate training, you should see progress over time.

The good news is that you can banish the idea of having a house full of smelly old newspapers for the first 6 months of puppy potty training!

Chihuahua's like most animals are naturally born/raised in a 'nest' environment and will want to move away from the 'nest' to complete their potty functions. This makes housebreaking puppies easier than you may think. Most dogs will start doing this by themselves after about 3 weeks - your job is to make sure that when they start this natural process, they know where the 'right place' to go is!

Consistency and perseverance are the watch words for all types of training, and especially for housebreaking puppies. For successful puppy potty training it is essential that each time an activity changes you take your puppy/dog outside to the nominated place to do his 'business':

- Every hour up to the age of about 8/9 weeks
- Shortly after each feed
- After playing
- After exercise
- After any other excitement (visitors etc)
- Last thing at night
- First thing in the morning

Corrections and punishments for indoor accidents will only teach your puppy not to eliminate around you (even when outdoors), but won't stop him from

eliminating indoors when you're not around. If you catch the puppy in the act, say 'No!' sharply and carry the puppy outside.

Warning: Avoid giving your Chihuahua the message that relieving himself is wrong. Don't rub his nose in the mess, and don't hit him with a newspaper.

When house training dogs praise is absolutely critical, and the praise must be for the act of doing the business - not for going outside or for coming back in - dogs associate actions with praise - so catching them in the act is key to all successful training.

Choose some words that you will use for each act and stick with them - this will pay dividends throughout your dog's life. Remember to choose words you are happy to use in public!

Make sure you feed your Chihuahua at regular times everyday as this makes bathroom breaks regular as well. Feed your puppy 2-3 times a day.

As soon as he is finished eating, take him to a grassy "potty area". Speak the words "go potty" or "go in the grass" before and while he is eliminating. Be sure to praise him when he is done.

What you are doing is building word associations with your Chihuahua that will allow you to encourage his potty activity on command.

This comes in handy when you and your Chihuahua are at unusual locations and at pit stops during long haul travel. It also saves you from cleaning unwanted fecal material off the carpet at home.

In the early days of housebreaking your Chihuahua it is important to let your puppy/dog out during the night. You will quickly learn to recognize the difference between cries for attention and cries for a real need - this is the only way your puppy/dog can let you know, so it is vital that you respond. However, this night time requirement must be for business only, praise for doing the job and then straight back to bed - just like with children. If you are not strict with this, you will very quickly find yourself with a night time play routine which your puppy/dog will adore!

It is a good idea to train your puppy to use a place where you can easily clean up and dispose of the droppings in an environmentally friendly way, such as flushing them down the toilet. Refrain from disposing droppings in the sewer. This is because worms that infect dogs and make them sick get spread around through the eggs or larvae found in the feces. Some, like the roundworm, can also infect children.



House Training Accidents

Housetraining accidents can be frustrating but finding a mistake in the house can mean more than that your dog simply isn't housetrained. Before you blame your Chihuahua, look at all the possible reasons.

Why Chihuahua dogs have accidents

Once you find the cause of a dog's accidents, a solution often becomes evident.

Common causes include:

- A medical condition such as a urinary tract infection or parasites. If your dog urinates small amounts frequently, suspect a urinary tract infection and contact your veterinarian.
- Territorial marking. If your Chihuahua is lifting his leg in the house, he may be marking his territory. This is a behavior training issue, not a housetraining issue.
- Anxiety or fear caused by being alone or some outside event like construction or loud noises.
- Confusion about what is expected, which means your Chihuahua is not actually housetrained.

Solving the problem

Step one to resolving this problem is finding the cause and your first stop is the veterinarian. Once a medical condition is ruled out, then these basic steps should help get you back on track.

- Schedule food, water and exercise. This will help make the digestive system more predictable.
- Consider crate training.
- Try to catch him in the act and distract him by saying "Ahhh" or "No" in a serious tone. This should stop him in mid-stream. Then take him outside to finish the job.
- Always praise your Chihuahua and offer a kibble of food as a treat for relieving himself where and when you want. This will strengthen and reinforce good habits.

- Clean up accidents with a good odor remover so no lingering smell attracts him back to that spot.
- Make sure your Chihuahua isn't left alone too long. If you work, either come home midday, hire a walker, or leave your pup in a small area on papers (Don't put papers inside a crate).

If your Chihuahua is having accidents the moment he or she is left alone, please seek the help of a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional, as this may be a sign of separation anxiety.

Do's and don'ts

- Do get Chihuahua puppies outside at least six times a day, adult dogs at least four.
- Don't punish your dog after the fact – you'll just give your Chihuahua another source of fear, which could lead to more accidents.
- Do go out with him to praise and reward him for going outside.
- Don't rub your Chihuahua's nose in the mess - this will scare him.
- Do control where and when your Chihuahua goes to the bathroom by using a crate, regular routine and close supervision.



Crate Training Your Chihuahua

Most Chihuahua dog owners do not use crates for their Chihuahua's, however most expert trainers and vets recommend them.

Providing your Chihuahua puppy or dog with an indoor kennel crate can satisfy many dogs' need for a den-like enclosure. Besides being an effective housebreaking tool (because it takes advantage of your Chihuahua's natural reluctance to soil its sleeping place), it can also help to reduce separation anxiety, to prevent destructive behavior (such as chewing furniture), to keep a puppy away from potentially dangerous household items (i.e., poisons, electrical wires, etc.), and to serve as a mobile indoor dog house which can be moved from room to room whenever necessary.

A kennel crate also serves as a travel cabin for your Chihuahua when traveling by car or plane. Additionally, most hotels which accept dogs on their premises require them to be crated while in the room to prevent damage to hotel furniture and rugs.

Most Chihuahua's which have been introduced to the kennel crate while still young grow up to prefer their crate to rest in or "hang-out" in. Therefore a crate (or any other area of confinement) should NEVER be used for the purpose of punishment.

We recommend that you provide a kennel crate throughout your Chihuahua's lifetime. Some crates allow for the removal of the door once it is no longer necessary for the purpose of training. The crate can be placed under a table, or a table top can be put on top of it to make it both unobtrusive and useful.

Why crate train your Chihuahua?

Here are seven good reasons why you should use a crate for your Chihuahua.

1. Dogs in the wild live in a den which provides protection and a great deal of psychological satisfaction. All dogs, including Chihuahua's, have a strong natural tendency to seek out this type of shelter.
2. In your home, if your dog has no place to call his own, he will make feeble attempts to curl up under a table, a chair or some other choice location.
3. When you use a crate, you give your Chihuahua a place to feel secure...something to get his back up against. He won't feel isolated

because the crate provides essential visibility & ventilation. Just like a baby in a playpen.

4. You will also be taking advantage of your Chihuahua's natural instinct to keep his home clean, therefore, when he has to "go" he will try to hold it until you can take him outside to the proper area. This will teach him a schedule and help him eliminate accidents.
5. With a crate, your Chihuahua puppy will have fewer behavioral problems like excessive barking and chewing.
6. Crates make comfortable and safe places for your Chihuahua to travel in.
7. But most of all, by providing him a safe and secure home, he'll be happier and more self confident.

Buying a crate

Where to buy a crate: Crates can be purchased through most pet supply outlets, through pet mail order catalogs and through most professional breeders. There are a number of crate manufactures but like Midwest and Vari-Kennels.

Your dog should be able to stand up and turn around comfortably. Individual dogs within a breed can vary in size. You may decide a crate one size larger might be best for your Chihuahua. The standard crate that is suitable for a Chihuahua size is extra small, 16" to 22" long.

Crates can cost between \$35 and \$250 depending on the size and the type of crate and the source.

The cost of not using a crate:

- Your shoes
- Books
- Table legs
- Chairs and sofas
- Throw rugs and carpet, and
- Electric, telephone and computer wires.
- The real cost, however, is your Chihuahua's safety and your peace of mind.

Location of your Chihuahua crate

Whenever possible, place the crate near or next to you when you are home. This will encourage your Chihuahua to go inside it without his feeling lonely or isolated

when you go out. A central room in the apartment (i.e.: living room or kitchen) or a large hallway near the entrance is a good place to crate your puppy.

Preparing the crate

Vari-Kennel Type: Take the crate apart, removing the screws, the top and the door. Allow your pup to go in and out of the bottom half of the crate before attaching the top half. This stage can require anywhere from several hours to a few days. This step can be omitted in the case of a young puppy who accepts crating right away.

Wire Mesh Type: Tie the crate door back so that it stays open without moving or shutting closed. If the crate comes with a floor pan, place a piece of cardboard or a towel between the floor (or crate bottom) and the floor pan in order to keep it from rattling.

Furnishing your Chihuahua puppy's crate

Toys and Treats: Place your Chihuahua favorite toys and dog treats at the far end opposite the door opening. These toys may include the "Tuffy", "Billy", "Kong", "Nylabone" or a ball. Toys and balls should always be inedible and large enough to prevent their being swallowed. Any fragmented toys should be removed to prevent choking and internal obstruction. You may also place a sterilized marrow bone filled with cheese or dog treats in the crate.

Water: A small hamster-type water dispenser with ice water should be attached to the crate if your puppy is to be confined for more than two hours in the crate.

Bedding: Place a towel or blanket inside the crate to create a soft, comfortable bed for the puppy. If your puppy chews the towel, remove it to prevent him from swallowing or choking on the pieces. Although most Chihuahua puppies prefer lying on soft bedding, some may prefer to rest on a hard, flat surface, and may push the towel to one end of the crate to avoid it. If the puppy urinates on the towel, remove bedding until your Chihuahua no longer eliminates in the crate.

Introducing the crate to your puppy

In order that your Chihuahua puppy associate his/her kennel crate with comfort, security and enjoyment, please follow these guidelines:

Occasionally throughout the day, drop small pieces of kibble or dog biscuits in the crate. While investigating his new crate, your Chihuahua pup will discover edible treasures, thereby reinforcing his positive associations with the crate. You may also feed him in the crate to create the same effect. If the dog hesitates, it often works to feed him in front of the crate, then right inside the doorway and then, finally, in the back of the crate.

In the beginning, praise and pet your puppy when he enters. Do not try to push, pull or force him into the crate. At this early stage of introduction only inductive methods are suggested. Overnight exception: You may need to place your Chihuahua in his crate and shut the door upon retiring. (In most cases, the crate should be placed next to your bed overnight. If this is not possible, the crate can be placed in the kitchen, bathroom or living room.)

You may also play this enjoyable and educational game with your Chihuahua puppy or dog: Without alerting your puppy, drop a small dog biscuit into the crate. Then call your puppy and say to him, "Where's the biscuit? It's in your room." Using only a friendly, encouraging voice, direct your puppy toward his crate. When the puppy discovers the treat, give enthusiastic praise. The biscuit will automatically serve as a primary reward. Your pup should be free to leave its crate at all times during this game. Later on, your puppy's toy or ball can be substituted for the treat.

It is advisable first to crate your Chihuahua for short periods of time while you are home with him. In fact, crate training is best accomplished while you are in the room with your Chihuahua. Getting him used to your absence from the room in which he is crated is a good first step. This prevents an association being made with the crate and your leaving him/her alone.

Important reminders

Chihuahua puppies under 4 months of age have little bladder or sphincter control. Puppies under 3 months have even less. Very young puppies under 9 weeks should not be crated, as they need to eliminate very frequently (usually 8-12 times or more daily).

Collars: Always remove your puppy or dog's collar before confining in the crate. Even flat buckle collars can occasionally get struck on the bars or wire mesh of a crate. If you must leave a collar on the pup when you crate him (e.g.: for his identification tag), use a safety "break away" collar.

Warm Weather: Do not crate a Chihuahua puppy or dog when temperatures reach an uncomfortable level. Cold water should always be available to puppies, especially during warm weather. [Never leave an unsupervised Chihuahua on a terrace, roof or inside a car during warm weather. Also, keep outdoor exercise periods brief until the hot weather subsides.]

Be certain that your Chihuahua has fully eliminated shortly before being crated. Be sure that the crate you are using is not too large to discourage your puppy from eliminating in it. Rarely does a Chihuahua puppy or dog eliminate in the crate if it is properly sized and your dog is an appropriate age to be crated a given amount of time. If your Chihuahua continues to eliminate in the crate, the

following may be the causes:

- Your Chihuahua is too young to have much control.
- Your Chihuahua has a poor or rich diet, or very large meals.
- Your Chihuahua did not eliminate prior to being confined.
- Your Chihuahua has worms.
- Your Chihuahua has gaseous or loose stools.
- Your Chihuahua drank large amounts of water prior to being crated.
- Your Chihuahua has been forced to eliminate in small confined areas prior to crate training.
- Your Chihuahua is suffering from a health condition or illness (i.e., bladder infection, prostate problem, etc.)
- Your Chihuahua is experiencing severe separation anxiety when left alone.

Accidents in the crate

If your Chihuahua puppy messes in his crate while you are out, do not punish him upon your return. Simply wash out the crate using a pet odor neutralizer (such as Nature's Miracle, Nilodor, or Outright). Do not use ammonia-based products, as their odor resembles urine and may draw your Chihuahua back to urinate in the same spot again.

Chihuahua puppies purchased in pet stores, or puppies which were kept solely in small cages or other similar enclosures at a young age (between approximately 7 and 16 weeks of age), may be considerably harder to housebreak using the crate training method due to their having been forced to eliminate in their sleeping area during this formative stage of development.

This is the time when most puppies are learning to eliminate outside their sleeping area. Confining them with their waste products retards the housebreaking process, and this problem can continue throughout a dog's adult life.

Crating duration guidelines

9-10 Weeks	Approx. 30-60 minutes
11-14 Weeks	Approx. 1-3 hours
15-16 Weeks	Approx. 3-4 hours
17 + Weeks	Approx. 4+ (6 hours maximum)

Except for overnight, neither puppies nor dogs should be crated for more than 5 hours at a time. (6 hours maximum!)

The crate as a punishment

NEVER use the crate as a form of punishment or reprimand for your puppy or dog. This simply causes the dog to fear and resent the crate. If correctly introduced to his crate, your puppy should be happy to go into his crate at any time. You may however use the crate as a brief time-out for your puppy as a way of discouraging nipping or excessive rowdiness.

Children and the crate

Do not allow children to play in your Chihuahua's crate or to handle your dog while he/she is in the crate. The crate is your Chihuahua's private sanctuary. His/her rights to privacy should always be respected.

Barking in the crate

In most cases a Chihuahua puppy who cries incessantly in his crate has either been crated too soon (without taking the proper steps as outlined above) or is suffering from separation anxiety and is anxious about being left alone. Some Chihuahua's may simply be under exercised. Others may not have enough attention paid them. Try increasing the amount of exercise and play your dog receives daily.

When not to use a crate

Do not crate your puppy or dog if:

- Your Chihuahua is too young to have sufficient bladder or sphincter control.
- Your Chihuahua has diarrhea. Diarrhea can be caused by: worms, illness, intestinal upsets such as colitis, too much and/or the wrong kinds of food, quick changes in the dogs diet, or stress, fear or anxiety.

- Your Chihuahua is vomiting.
- You must leave him crated for more than the Crating Duration Guidelines suggest.
- Your Chihuahua has not eliminated shortly before being placed inside the crate.
(See Housetraining Guidelines for exceptions.)
- The temperature is excessively high.
- Your Chihuahua has not had sufficient exercise, companionship and socialization.

Alternative methods of confining your Chihuahua puppy

There are alternative methods to crating very young Chihuahua puppies and puppies who must be left alone in the house for lengths of time exceeding the recommended maximum duration of confinement.

Try the following:

Use a small to medium-sized room space such as a kitchen, large bathroom or hallway with non-porous floor. Set up the crate on one end, the food and water a few feet away, and some newspaper (approx. 2'x3' to 3'x3') using a 3 to 4 layer thickness, several feet away. Confine your puppy to this room or area using a 3 ft. high, safety-approved child's gate rather than shutting off the opening by a solid door. Your pup will feel less isolated if it can see out beyond its immediate place of confinement. Puppy proof the area by removing any dangerous objects or substances.



Basic Chihuahua Obedience Training

Good Chihuahua puppy training is the key to a well behaved dog. Good dog behavior makes your Chihuahua a pleasure to own and a credit to you as its owner - this is why it is important to teach your dog to respond to simple commands.

No training routine should be a chore; it should be fun for both of you and will bring many benefits for years to come. It is extremely satisfying owning a well behaved dog, but the early steps of dog training require consistency, understanding and unlimited patience to make training puppies easy!

10 top Tips to Ensure Chihuahua Training Success

1. Make training fun for both of you. If you and your dog are enjoying yourselves, you're more likely to succeed.
2. Before you start your training session for the day, have your goals in mind.
3. Be patient and progress gradually
4. Don't make the sessions too long, avoid boredom (for both of you!)
5. Reward good behavior with praise and treats
6. Never shout at or punish your Chihuahua
7. Teach one thing at a time
8. Always use the same command words for the same actions - and make sure the rest of your family does too
9. Keep training sessions short. Three short sessions of 5-10 minutes each will teach your dog more than one 30-minute session.
10. Timing is everything in dog training. Video yourself or have a friend watch you to make sure that you reward your dog as he does the behavior you ask for- not afterwards! Studies have shown that one of the biggest differences between pro trainers and amateurs is that the pros give their rewards in a timely manner while the amateurs are late.

Most Chihuahua's are born with an inherent desire to please, and this natural trait is maximized with enthusiastic training combined with a reward system. Always reward good dog behavior - this means every single time he is obedient and responds to your commands. Rewards-based dog training is without doubt the most effective.

Chihuahua puppies, just like babies, learn from trial and error - so if your dog burns his nose on the fire, it is extremely unlikely that he would ever do it a second time! If he barks for attention and everyone ignores him, he will soon give up. However, it is easy for your dog obedience training to go wrong if he does something wrong and is rewarded, like raiding the bin and finding food, as then he is likely to repeat it.

Repeat rewarding good dog behavior and stopping doing the things that are unpleasant or unrewarding is the basis of all learning experience. In order to train your dog / puppy you simply need to exploit this process and manipulate situations so that he learns what you want him to do.

All Chihuahua puppies (and humans!) learn more quickly and retain more of what they have learned, if they do not feel under stress. This means that puppy training using rewards is far more effective and sustainable than teaching using punishment. It is important to create a feeling of trust between you and your dog / puppy whilst using any puppy training techniques - this allows your dog to find new ways of earning rewards, without the fear of being wrong.

Rewards when puppy training can be anything that your dog / puppy wants - the most obvious is food, however pleasant social contact, verbal praise (usually accompanied by that high pitched, excited, squeaky voice that we do so naturally!) and physical praise, strokes on the back and/or chest also work really well - but not pats on the head, who would enjoy that!

The quickest and easiest way to train a happy working dog is with food. You can use the food to lure your dog into position and to make the behavior really rewarding for your dog. Don't worry- you'll fade the use of food out quickly!

Games with toys are good puppy training rewards - but just like humans, different dogs are motivated by different things. You will need to find out what motivates your dog and what is the most successful puppy training reward and therefore will work best.

Sometimes we expect too much from our dogs too soon. Chihuahua are really bad about generalizing. For instance, just because they know "sit" in the living room, does not mean that they know what "sit" means in the park. You'll have to practice each new command in a variety of places before your dog knows it everywhere. But remember, the more commands you teach your dog, the more quickly he'll generalize new ones!

The secret is to make your Chihuahua training positive and fun.



Training Your Chihuahua to Sit

Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your Chihuahua into a quiet room.

Step 2

Hold a treat just over and above your Chihuahua's nose. Slowly draw it straight up so that your dog's nose follows the food. He'll sit when you do so, to keep the food in sight. Don't give any command at this stage!

Step 3

As your dog is sitting (be quick!) praise your dog and give him the treat! Repeat until your dog is sitting quickly when he sees the food move. Take a break!

Step 4

Get ready with your dog and food as for the first session. Take a piece of food, say "sit", and then lure your dog into position. Praise and treat. Repeat until your Chihuahua's is starting to sit as you say the word "sit". Take a break!

Step 5

Now you start to fade out the food. Get ready as you did for the last session. Say "sit". When your Chihuahua sits, praise and pet your dog! Repeat the "sit", but this time give your dog a treat for sitting. Repeat, giving your dog a treat at random times.

Step 6

Now you can start to generalize. Ask your Chihuahua to sit in different locations. Depending on your dog, you may need to lure a few sits with food first in the first few new locations. Randomly treat the sits. Keep practicing in new locations until your dog reliably sits on the first command no matter where you are.

Congratulations- you have trained your Chihuahua to sit!



How to Train Your Chihuahua to Stay

Step 1

Get a supply of small, tasty treats. Go into a quiet room. Have your Chihuahua sit. Hold a treat in your hand, and let your dog know you have it. As your dog reaches for it, close your hand. The instant your dog pulls his head even a bit away, praise and let him have the treat. Timing is important here! Repeat until your dog does not go for the treat, but instead instantly pulls back.

Step 2

Repeat Step 1, but wait for a second or two after your Chihuahua pulls back before giving the treat and praise. Make sure you treat/praise while your dog is sitting! If he gets up, walk a couple of steps away and try again. Repeat until your dog is sitting for 5 seconds. Stay right by your dog while doing this! The commonest reason that people have trouble teaching stay is that they try to leave their dogs too quickly. If your Chihuahua won't stay when you are next to him, he certainly won't stay when you walk away! Making sure your dog is always successful in this step before you move on will make later learning much more successful.

Step 3

Continue step 2, but now tell your dog "stay" as you show the treat, and give a release word like "OK" when you give your Chihuahua the treat. Work until your dog will sit with you right in front of him for 30 seconds. If your dog gets up, quietly say something like "uh-uh" and try again. You want your dog to learn that "uh-uh" means that he won't get a reward.

After your dog makes a mistake, scale back your criterion a bit. For example, if he got up after 15 seconds, go back to sitting for 10 seconds for the next few tries, then try 15 again. If your dog makes more than 1 or 2 mistakes in a row, you are hurrying too fast. Move back to what your dog can do successfully and build from there.

Step 4

Repeat step 3, but begin to move away from your dog just a little bit- for example, take 1 step backward then return. Then take a step to one side, then the other. Repeat until you can walk in a tiny circle around your dog. Again, if your dog gets up, say "uh-uh" and try again. Remember not to hurry.

Step 5

Repeat step 4, but start walking up to 5 steps away from your Chihuahua. Continue until your dog will stay for 30 seconds while you walk no more than 5 steps away.

Step 6

Start doing stays in areas with some distraction and in new areas. When first practicing in a new area, go back to very short stays right in front of you, and only do more when your dog is always successful. Repeat until your dog will stay in a new area for 30 seconds with you 5 steps away.

Step 7

Very slowly lengthen the distance you go when you walk away to 30 feet, and the time to 1 minute. Remember not to hurry!

Step 8

You can train a down-stay in the same way, starting at step 1. It should go much faster, now that your dog knows something about staying.

Congratulations- you have a Chihuahua who can stay!



Teach Your Chihuahua the Down Command

Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your dog into a quiet room.

Step 2

Hold a treat just in front of your Chihuahua's nose. Slowly draw it down and between your dog's front legs, towards the ground. He'll lay down as he follows the food. Don't give any command at this stage! If your dog has a hard time with this, hold the treat under a chair or table where he'll have to lay down to get at it.

Step 3

As your dog is laying down (be quick!) praise him and give him the treat! Repeat until your dog is laying down quickly when he sees the food move. Take a break!

Step 4

Get ready with your dog and food as for the first session. Take a piece of food, say "down", and then lure your dog into position. It helps if you point to the ground; using a motion similar to the way you used the food lure (you can use this later as a signal to your dog.). Praise and treat. Repeat until your dog is starting to lay down as you say the word "down". Take a break!

Step 5

Now you start to fade the food. Get ready as you did for the last session. Say "down". When your dog lays down, praise and pet your dog! Repeat the "down", but this time give your dog a treat for laying down. Repeat, giving your dog a treat at random times.

Step 6

Now you can start to generalize. Ask your Chihuahua to lay down in different locations. Depending on your dog, you may need to lure a few "downs" with food first in the beginning few new locations. Randomly treat successful downs. Keep practicing in new locations until your dog reliably lays down on the first command no matter where you are.

Congratulations- you have trained your Chihuahua to lay down!



How to Train Your Chihuahua to Come

The "come" command is one that is routinely disobeyed by many Chihuahua - and often for good reason!

To start with, here are a few rules for teaching "come":

Never call your Chihuahua to you for anything he may perceive as negative-scolding, baths, nail clipping, pill-giving, etc. If you need to give your dog a bath or pill, go get your dog! "Come" should always be a command your dog is happy to hear.

Never call your Chihuahua when you can't reinforce the command or haven't trained your dog to respond to the command. You are just teaching your dog to ignore you.

If your Chihuahua already routinely ignores the word "come", pick a new command word like "here" or "front" to use while training your dog.

Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your dog into a quiet room; one where you have enough room to take several steps backwards and where there is nothing of great interest to your dog.

Step 2

When your dog is a few steps away from you, and not looking at you, say "Rover, come!" in a happy, high-pitched voice. As he turns to you, back up quickly so he has to run to catch you (the chase instinct is a powerful motivator for most dogs!). As he reaches you, lure him into a sit and give him treats and praise! Repeat until he is running up to you at the sound of your call. Take a break!

Step 3

Repeat the step above. Now, however, before you give your Chihuahua his treat, take hold of his collar as he sits. Feed him while you hold his collar. As you release the collar, say "Go play!" This step ensures that you can control your dog when he comes to you. Without this training, lots of dogs will just run up to you and run circles around you when you call them! Repeat until he is sitting in front of you, and you can take his collar every time you call him.

Step 4

Now move to the back yard (or a small, safe, boring fenced area if you do not have a yard) - Repeat Step 2 above. If your dog does not come as soon as you call him, turn and run! He'll run after you to catch up.

It's best to train this without a leash (after all, most of the times you want your

dog to come to you, he'll be off-leash), but if your dog isn't responding, put him on a leash. Do not let the leash get tight, however, unless you have to run backwards, and do not jerk the leash or yell at your dog. Even if you need to use the leash, make sure to praise and pet your dog when he gets to you! Save the treats for the times he responds right away. After a few sessions with the leash on, let it drag, picking it up only if your dog does not respond to the command. Then remove it.

Repeat until your dog is turning and running to you reliably every time you call. Don't forget to take hold of his collar and release him with "go play!"

Step 5

For this step, you'll need a "long line" You can use a 50' piece of clothesline or a special long nylon leash. Practice in your back yard or fenced area. Let your Chihuahua drag the line; do not pick it up. Let your dog wander away. If he starts to go too far, step on the line (but try to call him before he goes too far!).

When he is about 10' away, call him. If he responds right away, treats and praise! If he does not, run backwards as in step 4 above. Remember to praise and pet as he comes to you. If he does not come even when you run back, take hold of the line and give it a gentle tug. Praise and pet your Chihuahua when he comes to you.

Save the treats for the times he responds right away. Repeat until he is running up to you at the sound of your call, every time. Don't forget to take hold of his collar and release him with "go play!" Take a break!

Step 6

Repeat step 5 above, but gradually let your dog go a little further before you call him. When he comes every time from 50', go to step 7.

Step 7

Repeat Step 6 in many different areas until your Chihuahua is absolutely reliable. Gradually introduce distractions such as people nearby, other dogs, food, etc. If your dog is distracted, shorten the leash and work until he comes even with the distraction. When your dog comes every time, even with distractions, go to step 8.

Step 8

In a safe, fenced-in area, remove the leash. Let your Chihuahua get some distance away. Call him. If he comes right away (he should!), have a party!

If not, walk him down. Do not yell or get mad, but calmly walk up to your dog and take him by the collar (no matter how long it takes you to catch him!). Quickly walk him back to where you first called, giving the collar short shakes and saying something like "I said "come"!". At the point where you called him, release him

and then call again. He should come straight to you- most dogs need only one or two collar shakes to know you mean business. Repeat until he comes every time.

Congratulations- you have taught your Chihuahua to come!



How to Train Your Chihuahua to Walk Nicely

This method relies on the fact that dogs out for a walk like to go somewhere. It is very effective.

Step 1

Put your Chihuahua on a leash, preferably a 6-foot one. From now on, you will tolerate no pulling. Every time your dog pulls, immediately stop. Plant your feet and do not move. As long as your dog pulls, stay stationary. But, the minute your dog lets up the tension on the leash, praise and continue walking! Don't expect to get very far the first walk. You may not even get out the door! When your dog is properly close to you, give praise and an occasional treat- and the opportunity to keep walking!

Step 2

Most Chihuahua's learn very quickly that they don't get to go anywhere if they pull. If you have a really recalcitrant dog, instead of just stopping, every time your dog pulls, quickly turn and walk in the opposite direction. Be prepared to get a bit dizzy! As soon as this method starts having results, switch back to just stopping.

Congratulations- you have taught your Chihuahua to walk to heel



How to Teach Your Chihuahua to Retrieve

Teaching your Chihuahua to retrieve is one of the easiest commands, simply because it his nature to carry things in his mouth.

The best items to use when trying to teach your dog to retrieve or fetch items back to you, is with his favorite toys.

It is a good idea to first teach your dog to stay before you learn him fetching, that way you can throw or hide his toy before allowing him to find, retrieve and bring the toy back to you.

Step 1

Begin by commanding your dog to sit, and place his toy a few steps away from where he is positioned, so that he can clearly see it. Then ask him to find it by using the command "Find" "toy" or the name of the toy. As soon as he goes to the toy, even if he doesn't touch it, praise him instantly and give him a treat. Continue repeating this maneuver, praising him each time, and try to encourage him to pick up the toy in his mouth. Once he picks up the toy, praise him and give him a treat, and then give him back the toy and play with him for a while.

Step 2

As soon as your Chihuahua has learned how to retrieve the toy, you will then need to begin working on getting him to bring the toy to you. The first time he comes running to you with the toy, praise him right away and give him a treat. After the first time, only praise him when he puts the toy in your hand. You can help him accomplish this by trading the toy for a treat.

Step 3

Once your dog is able to easily retrieve and give you the toy, you can then begin to proceed with more advanced retrieving exercises, such as randomly hiding toys or other objects somewhere in the house or outside, and give him the command to "find" (or whatever you have been using). His task is to bring you the object or toy that is hidden which contains human scent. You will find that teaching your Chihuahua to retrieve is not only a fun game he will enjoy, but it can be quite useful if you ever lose an item.

The more practice your dog has at it, the better he will get. Remember to always praise him.

Congratulations- you have taught your Chihuahua to retrieve!



Chihuahua's and Obedience Class

Discipline is one of the most important aspects of owning a Chihuahua.

Puppy school is not an option, it is a necessity to train owners, including children in the family, how to manage the Chihuahua and nurture it into becoming a well-adjusted member of the family.

Puppy school is for the Chihuahua to help develop good habits right from the start. Wait until your Chihuahua is at least 6 months old before putting him through any serious work.

Trainers with extensive experience and knowledge can deal with just about any behavior problems your pup might come up with.

Choose a trainer who is purposeful and patient. The well-trained Chihuahua is a sight to behold going through his paces in the class. Their innate intelligence makes many Chihuahua great successes in the obedience ring.

Of more importance is for you as owner to continue to practice the obedience lessons with your Chihuahua. Consistency and patience are necessary to ensure you don't end up with a stubborn, Chihuahua.

They will best remember the lessons when you incorporate them into your everyday routines with your dog.

For example you can tell your pup to "heel" while he follows you around the house, and to "sit" and "stay" while you prepare his dinner. As your wake up greeting in the morning he can do a "roll over". Tell him to "go find the ball" while you get dressed and "go get the leash" before you go for walks together.



Reprimanding your Chihuahua

Talk to Chihuahua like you would to children when they do something wrong.

Tell them "no" and show them immediately what the correct behavior should be and reward them for doing it right. After a few times they'll know how to do it right.

For example, tell him "NO" when you catch him chewing the shoes. Then immediately give him his own toys to chew and cheer him on to chew on the toys. Praise him for doing so.

Use sparingly those reprimanding words like "No," "Stop that," "get off" and "bad

dog!” Instead use more praises to reward good behavior in your Chihuahua and only then the reprimands will take on stronger meaning.

A correct reprimand is short, sharp and immediate.

Only reprimand when you catch your Chihuahua doing something wrong, and punish only with your voice.

Hitting, kicking, slapping or spanking your Chihuahua would create more problems and usually makes existing problems worse, not to mention you seriously risk injuring or killing your Chihuahua. You may just end up with a barking and stubborn, one that is leery, hand-shy, fearful or aggressive.



Repetition and Rewarding Your Chihuahua

Repetitions in doing the right things and rewarding your Chihuahua every single time are crucial in training.

The more often he is rewarded, the better and quicker he will learn. Create situations where your Chihuahua can get plenty of practice at doing the right things.

Be sure to praise when he does a good job.

This is simple but not always easy to do. Bad behaviors like biting, constant yelping and barking and tearing the house apart get our immediate notice. What we easily forget to acknowledge are the good parts - when the Chihuahua is lying down quietly, chewing on his own toys, leaving the carpet unsoiled.

Praise and reward are the most important part of maintaining your Chihuahua's good behavior and preventing him from getting into trouble.



Unwanted Chihuahua Behavior And How To Cure It

Training your Chihuahua is relatively straightforward. Chihuahuas are intelligent and helped by their instincts begin to learn behavior patterns which are normal for them or make their lives easier but which are not acceptable to humans.

In this section you will find out about the most common of these behaviors which, as a human, you see as problems but your Chihuahua sees as fun, normal or making his life easier.

There are 4 key things to remember when curing unwanted behavior:

Remember your Chihuahua is a dog, so don't expect him to behave like a human

- **Be consistent**
- **Be consistent**
- **Be consistent**

Lack of consistency is the biggest source of failure in adapting a Chihuahua behavior.

For example: If you spend time working to stop him begging, but the children drop food on the floor he will continue to beg, just as he will if Grandma sneaks a little under the table when no one is looking.

So remember BE CONSISTANT! And that includes everyone's understanding and participation in the matter.



Excessive Barking

Chihuahua's bark to communicate and it is in their nature to bark a lot. The key to managing this behavior lies in determining the cause, then offering a quieter alternative.

Why Chihuahua's bark

It's a fact of life that most dogs bark. Some breeds bark more than others. Some barking is necessary and useful ("There is someone at the door.") and other barking is just plain annoying. When your Chihuahua barks, he or she may be communicating:

I need exercise
I'm bored
I need to go outside.
I hear something
I'm home alone
Pay attention to me right now!

How to solve the problem

If you think your Chihuahua needs something like exercise or water in his bowl, call him to you. Have him sit, praise him and only then do what needs doing; otherwise you'll be rewarding barking, which can lead to more barking. If your Chihuahua dog or puppy's needs are met and he's just barking to bark, try this:

Start by saying "quiet" in a calm but firm tone.

If he stops barking, praise him and give him a treat, preferably a kibble of his food. Good dog!

If he does not stop barking (and many Chihuahua's won't at first), clip his leash on and call him to you.

Back away from whatever he is barking at and keep calling until he focuses on you. Good dog! Now praise and offer a food reward.

You can also try a mild aversive like a stream of water from a plant mister. If your Chihuahua is barking at the window, say 'quiet,' spray your dog (who should stop in surprise), call him to you and praise him.

After he looks at you and gets rewarded, have him sit or down (calmly help him obey if you need to) then offer more praise! A Chihuahua who learns to stop barking, come to you and lie down is a pretty easy dog to live with and that's a fine goal to work toward.

Leave a radio on for your Chihuahua if he barks when left alone. This is good company for him and helps drown out outside noises.

Do's and don'ts

Do make sure your dog is getting plenty of exercise and training everyday. A bored dog is more likely to bark.

Don't leave your dog alone in the backyard for long periods; that can cause many dogs to bark.

Please remember — any action to stop barking must be made while your Chihuahua is barking. After-the-fact attempts at correction will only confuse your dog. Use a calm, firm voice. Avoid yelling, which can be stressful and upsetting to your dog.



Begging

Dogs beg for food, attention, or other things they want because someone has taught them begging works. We teach dogs to beg by giving them what they want when they do so. The best solution is never to start rewarding begging in the first place, but if it's too late for that, there are ways to correct this behavior.

Why Chihuahua dogs beg

Chihuahua's beg because it works. The dog has learned that whenever it whines, barks, or begs in any way, the human hands out food or attention. You are training your dog to beg every time you:

Slip a piece of food under the table in response to begging.

Get up at night to check on a whining dog.

Do what the dog wants in response to its pleading eyes or insistent whining.

Correcting begging behavior

Dogs seldom repeat behavior that doesn't pay off; so if begging stops paying off, it will stop -- eventually.

Never feed your Chihuahua from the table. In addition to avoiding that perpetual beg, it also supports your position as the leader – for dogs, leaders control the

food. If your Chihuahua is already begging, consider crating him elsewhere when you eat.

Feed your Chihuahua away from where you eat so there is no confusion.

When your Chihuahua whines for any reason other than to go outside, just ignore him. If you cannot ignore him, give him other commands like 'come,' 'sit' or 'down' and praise and reward him for those. This will give him something positive to do and reminds him you're the leader in a non-confrontational way.

Do's and don'ts

The most important thing is consistency. If you surrender to your frustration after your Chihuahua has spent half an hour begging, you've simply taught him to beg for at least half an hour. Instead, train your dog to do what you want. Reward your dog when quiet and well behaved and eventually he will be quieter and better behaved.



Boredom

Although Chihuahua dogs are creatures of habit, they still crave exercise – both physical and mental. If you don't provide it for them, they can get bored and start to entertain themselves – often by doing things you don't like.

When Chihuahua dogs are bored

Bored Chihuahua's may:

Dig

Chew

Run away

Bark or otherwise try to get your attention

Harass the cat, annoy you, "lose" the ball under the couch repeatedly, lick/chew themselves, etc.

What to do about it

If you suspect your Chihuahua may be suffering from boredom, whether or not problem behaviors are present, you may want to:

Make a list of simple "tricks" to teach your dog, and try to teach a new trick every few weeks.

Keep a well-stocked box of dog toys (out of view) to provide diversion when it is needed. Rotate toys every few days, keeping 3-4 out at all times.

Introduce food-dispensing toys to your Chihuahua.

Make sure your Chihuahua gets plenty of exercise. Simply hanging around in the back yard may not be enough. Do things with your dog such as take long walks or play fetch.

Interact with your Chihuahua and offer praise and a kibble of food for good behavior. See how many good behaviors you can reward in a day.

When possible, take your Chihuahua along when visiting friends or running errands.

Remember...

Your Chihuahua's lifestyle influences his behavior. Regular walks or play periods with your dog and praise for tricks will make your dog's life fun and stimulating. A happy Chihuahua is less likely to develop annoying behavior problems.



Chewing

Chewing is normal for Chihuahua's, but it can cause problems when your shoes, books or furniture are the targets. Correcting problem chewing is often simply a matter of preventing unwanted chewing while encouraging your Chihuahua to chew appropriate dog toys. If chewing only happens when left alone, try confinement (see Crate Training), It may also be a sign of Separation Anxiety or Boredom.

Why Chihuahua dogs chew

Chewing is usually a healthy, normal thing to do when it isn't destructive.

Chihuahua's chew for many reasons:

- To release pent-up energy.
- Stress.
- Teething, which generally occurs between three and six months of age.
- Because the simply finds chewing enjoyable.

Keep in mind that some behavior that looks like chewing or biting is actually exploratory 'mouthing.' Chihuahua's learn about an object's feel and texture with

their mouths in the way people learn those things by feeling with their hands.

Correcting inappropriate chewing

Buy appropriate chew toys. Then, when you see your Chihuahua chewing something inappropriate:

Say "no" or "eh" in a low voice. (It's a sound similar to a mother's growl, which your puppy will take as a sign of disapproval)

If your Chihuahua stops to look at you, praise and give your puppy a preferred chew toy. Do not use old shoes, socks or gloves, as that will actually train your dog to chew your things.

Praise your dog whenever you see him chewing a dog toy. This teaches your Chihuahua that it is not chewing that is wrong – just chewing the wrong things.

Make sure Chihuahua puppies have chew toys available at all times, especially when teething.

When possible, put items your Chihuahua likes to chew away or out of reach. If you can't, keep your dog out of the area with gates or by closing doors.

When you aren't home, confine your Chihuahua in a safe area or crate your dog.

Increase his exercise and his training.

Do's and don'ts

Do provide lots of good, solid dog toys for chewing.

Do prevent problems by supervising your dog closely and exercising him often.

Do stay calm. If you catch your Chihuahua chewing something other than a dog toy do as suggested above.

Don't blame the Chihuahua for being a dog – give him toys to chew, reward him for chewing those, and prevent access to other items.



Digging

Digging can be annoying, and it is 'hardwired' into a Chihuahua personality. Therefore, watch when and where your Chihuahua digs —that will give you clues to why your dog is digging and how to manage, prevent, or control it.

Why Chihuahua dogs dig

Dogs dig for many reasons:

In summer, lying in a cool hole brings relief from the heat.

Burying treasure, such as a bone.

Investigating an interesting smell – in fact, terriers are 'hardwired' to dig up moles and other rodents

Releasing pent-up energy or alleviating boredom.

How to deal with digging Chihuahua's

If you'd like to stop your Chihuahua from digging, there are two ways to approach it: Redirect the behavior to a more desirable place or try to stop it entirely. You may want to try a combination of these ideas:

In warm weather, make sure your Chihuahua has a cool, shady spot to rest and plenty of water – better yet, bring your dog indoors.

In order to discourage future digs, bury a little of your Chihuahua's waste just below the surface before filling in the hole. If your dog digs in the same spot, he will find the waste. This often is enough to discourage digging.

If you catch your Chihuahua in the act of inappropriate digging, a sharp 'Leave It!' followed by a command such as 'Come' and praise for compliance will help distract and refocus your dog.

Make sure your Chihuahua gets plenty of exercise and time with you. Being alone in the backyard does not qualify as exercise. Walks, games of fetch, and romps with other dogs will tire your dog out.

Do not leave your Chihuahua outside unattended for long periods - that invites digging. If he must be left outside for a time, be sure to provide plenty of toys.

To redirect the behavior, you can build a sandbox for your dog. Bury toys just under the surface and reward your dog when he digs in the right area and finds his treasure.

Do's and don'ts

Do give your Chihuahua plenty of exercise every day.

Do keep him with you as much as possible.

Do use commands to direct your dog to behaviors you want then reward him.

Don't punish your Chihuahua when you find holes. Your dog won't associate the punishment with the crime.



Disgusting Habits

Dogs do a number of things that people find disgusting – but for the most part, these things are more annoying to humans than they are bad for dogs.

Disgusting things Chihuahua dogs do

- Chihuahua may eat feces – their own or another animal's – out of hunger, boredom, curiosity or, most appalling to us, they appear to just plain like it.
- Chihuahua's lick their crotches during grooming and sniff each other's crotches during normal greeting.
- Chihuahua's like rolling in smelly things – dead fish, garbage, anything they can find.

What you can do

These habits, while upsetting to humans, aren't typically dangerous to dogs. Still, in the interest of having a well-mannered Chihuahua that is welcome in the house, you can try to control these behaviors or at least learn how to deal with them.

Try to keep your Chihuahua healthy and entertained to alleviate hunger and boredom.

Pick up waste that is left in the yard every time you take your Chihuahua outdoors.

Coat feces with a bitter flavor to create a negative memory for your dog — your

Chihuahua will be more likely to avoid it in the future. (Be sure to provide plenty of fresh, clean drinking water so your dog can get some quick relief.)

Licking is part of a normal grooming routine, but excessive licking could indicate an infection or irritation. If you're not sure, ask your veterinarian.

A well-trained Chihuahua who obeys your command to 'come' can be steered clear of tempting targets to roll in.

If your Chihuahua does get smelly, simply bathe him and try to prevent him from rolling in the future by keeping him on a lead, removing the attractive item, and working hard on his 'leave it' and 'come' commands.

Do's and don'ts

Do pick up after your dog.

Don't leave him off-leash in an area where there are temptations.

Do work daily on his basic training so he'll respond reliably.

Don't punish your Chihuahua for being a dog – he won't understand.



Fearfulness

Chihuahua's can become fearful, but more importantly they startle easy. Thus there are things you can do – and things you shouldn't do, when addressing fearfulness in you Chihuahua.

What to do

Act the way you want your Chihuahua to act. So if you want him to be happy and calm, act happy and calm. No matter what the source of the fear, do NOT try to comfort your dog through snuggling, petting, or saying it's OK. It may seem like the most natural thing in the world, but your tone of voice and body language are actually telling your Chihuahua that there is something to fear. Instead, find fun distractions, like fetch or other games. Create positive experiences and reasons for your dog to feel good. Some pointers about common fears:

Fear of storms

The Cause: Most often, it's the strange sounds that accompany storms. Howling wind, lashing rain, booming thunder (made worse by the bright flashes of lightning), all these are much louder and scarier to dogs.

The Solution: A small, secure "den" like a crate can be comforting. Try turning on a radio or TV; the noise may take the shock out of the boom of thunder. Or you can try playing with your Chihuahua or try a training session – it'll distract your dog and give you plenty of chances to reward your dog, creating a positive experience. If this doesn't calm your dog, please speak to your veterinarian.

Fear of dogs

The Cause: Your Chihuahua may see other dogs as a threat.

The Solution: The best solution is experience. Bring your Chihuahua into contact with other friendly, dog-Chihuahua dogs early and often; a training class is a great way to do this, since it's neutral territory and the dogs are under control. Trips to the dog park should be done with caution, as often there are adolescent, excitable dogs there. Some Chihuahua's will thrive. Others will be overwhelmed and frightened. Watch your dog and see if he is having fun or is scared. Meeting plenty of friendly dogs should also help make your pet more comfortable.

Fear of people

The Cause: Your Chihuahua may see people as threats, either because your dog has not had enough socialization with enough different people, had frightening experiences with some people or, possibly, has a genetic predisposition to shyness.

The Solution: Experience will help. Always allow your Chihuahua to approach the person, do not allow the person to reach for your frightened dog. Do not drag your dog up to anyone - ever. Instead, give your dog treats – preferably a kibble of dog food, – when new people are around. As he gets braver, let people toss your dog a piece of food so that meeting new people becomes a good experience. Never, ever, attempt to force a frightened Chihuahua to take a treat from or meet a new person. By going slowly, allowing your Chihuahua to set the pace and using plenty of food rewards, your dog should learn to enjoy the company of people. If you're not seeing progress, have any concerns, have an aggressive dog or see growling, lunging, or cowering/hiding, please seek the guidance of a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional.

Fear of veterinarians

The Cause: First, establish that the fear IS of the veterinarian, and not people in general. If you do see behaviors at the veterinarian's office that you don't see otherwise, it could be sensory overload at the smell of so many other animals, or perhaps your Chihuahua has bad associations due to shots or other treatment.

The Solution: Try to make the experience good in general. Bring a favorite toy for

entertainment and include a trip to the park or other positive experiences. Bring food kibbles and ask your veterinarian and the staff to give pieces to your Chihuahua before, during and after the visit is complete so your dog has a positive association.

Remember:

You set the tone. If you're nervous and worried, your Chihuahua will be, too.



Outside Marking

When your Chihuahua stops for a quick 'potty break' at every tree, bush and streetlight, what you're seeing is marking behavior. Depending on where you live and your dog, this may be behavior you want to stop.

Why Chihuahua dogs mark

Chihuahua's "mark" to establish territory. Male Chihuahua's lift their legs to mark, usually selecting upright 'targets.' Each dog has a unique smell that the other dogs' sensitive noses can identify. So these marks act as a personal calling card, telling other dogs he has spoken for this territory.

Why correct marking behavior?

There are two good reasons to put a stop to marking:

Chihuahua who mark frequently often have an attitude problem. Getting control of the marking often helps you get control over other problems as well.

If you live in an area with a lot of dogs, marking can lead to conflict. When dogs who have claimed the same area meet on the street, each dog can try to drive off the "intruder."

How to correct marking

In the best of all worlds, don't let your Chihuahua start. But if you have, the sooner you retrain your dog, the easier it will be.

First, neuter your male Chihuahua, if you don't intend on using him for breeding. Doing this early usually prevents problem leg lifting and, done at any age, will help to minimize this behavior.

Encourage your Chihuahua to eliminate in one spot in your yard before you start your walk. Do this by walking back and forth in that area. When he urinates,

praise him then go for a larger stroll. This rewards quick emptying with exploration.

If your dog tries to mark during your walk, keep walking while saying, "Let's go, Heel!" in a happy tone of voice. If you keep moving and praise him for coming with you, you can prevent persistent lifting entirely.

If your Chihuahua is lifting his leg in the house, please seek the assistance of a qualified dog trainer or behaviorist.



Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is defined as your Chihuahua being greatly distressed whenever you leave, every time you leave. Scratching at the door, chewing things up, housetraining mistakes, barking hysterically and generally being extremely upset are a few of the signs. Most Chihuahua's want to be with their humans as much as possible. Chihuahua's that haven't been taught how to stay alone calmly may exhibit unwanted behaviors. Gradually adjusting dogs to being alone is the best approach.

Most puppies and some dogs experience a level of anxiety when left alone, even for very short periods of time. Most puppies learn that when they are left alone, nothing really bad happens to them, they are still alive, and their "people" come back. They learn how to entertain themselves while alone and gain confidence in their ability to be alone. As they grow up and gain confidence in themselves, their "people" can leave them for longer periods of time.

Some dogs, for various reasons, do not gain confidence in themselves. Some dogs are left alone too long when they are puppies and they become traumatized by the event. Other dogs are neglected or abused and therefore have a low self-esteem. These dogs can be bounced around from owner to owner and usually end up in an animal shelter. After they are adopted to well-meaning people they can still carry their low self-esteem and exhibit their learned behavior of separation anxiety. Other dogs for unknown reasons have a low tolerance for anxiety. And lastly, any dog can become traumatized unbeknownst to their "people" by some event and can spontaneously begin to experience separation anxiety.

All of these types of dogs can show profound anxiety when being left alone, or simply out of eye-sight of their "people." The process of teaching them self-confidence and the ability to entertain themselves can be time consuming and requires a lot of patience and positive reinforcement. Here's how to do it:

Preventing separation anxiety

It's good for your Chihuahua dog or puppy to be comfortable when home alone. You can help him learn this if you take a little time and use these simple steps.

Begin by changing your "leaving" routine. Chihuahuas that exhibit separation anxiety usually begin to get anxious long before you walk out the door. Most people have a set "leaving" routine that they go through before leaving the house. They put their shoes on, close the windows, lock the doors, jingle the car keys, etc. Dogs learn this routine very quickly and if they already get anxious from being left alone, this long, drawn out "leaving" routine can make matters worse.

When you leave the house, do so promptly. When you leave, say "Take care of the house." Don't make a big deal out of leaving, just start to teach them a phrase that means, "I'll be gone, but I'll be back." Then, when you leave, turn around and come back in after about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Say hello to your dog in a low-key manner and go about your day. You need to be low-key so that you teach your dog to be low-key. If you are overly anxious about leaving or coming home you will be conditioning your dog to be anxious as well.

The first day, you will leave and come back about a dozen times. Each time you leave, increase the time you are gone: 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 7 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, etc. Any time you come home and your dog was exhibiting his anxious behavior (chewing, barking, etc.) cut the time you leave in half next time. If he's still experiencing separation anxiety, cut your time in half again! Once your dog is no longer anxious, start increasing the times again.

Because of the time and commitment involved in these exercises, it is best if you do this on your vacation time for the first week or until you build up to about 4 hours of being gone with no anxiety from your dog. If vacation time is impossible, then start on Friday afternoon or evening, and make this your primary activity for the whole weekend. Then repeat this again the following weekend, varying the time you are gone. Leave for 30 minutes, then for 5 minutes, then for 10 minutes, then for 2 hours, etc.

Chihuahuas are social animals, and any Chihuahua that spends 8-10 hours a day, everyday all alone may begin to exhibit obsessive behaviors that may or may not develop into separation anxiety. A dog that experiences separation anxiety usually does his damage as soon as (or very shortly after) you leave the house. A dog that is bored and lonely will become destructive after a few hours (usually 4-6) of being left alone.

Another great confidence builder for Chihuahuas is any type of doggie class. Even if your Chihuahua knows all the obedience commands, he will benefit from

a class situation. Taking your dog to a doggie class increases his confidence in being able to handle new situations. It also increases his confidence in you as "leader."

Most importantly, it gives him the opportunity to socialize with other dogs and people, and spend quality time you.

If your Chihuahua is an "only" dog it is possible that this exacerbates his separation anxiety. Some Chihuahua's that do not have canine companionship become overly dependent on their humans. Sometimes referred to as "Velcro-dogs" (a dog that seems to stick to you where ever you go), they experience a great amount of stress whenever they are not accompanied by a human. Although not recommended as a cure-all, you may want to consider getting another dog or puppy for companionship. Another wonderful option is to find a playmate for your Chihuahua.

A weekly visit to or from a doggie-playmate's house can be very beneficial to "only" dogs (even those that do not suffer from separation anxiety). Chihuahua's benefit greatly from canine companionship. Schedule a playtime for your dog, with another dog that he likes, once or twice a week.

Be sure to spend daily quality time with your Chihuahua. One-on-one time spent with your dog for 5 - 20 minutes a day can help him feel more secure in his environment as well as help strengthen the bond between you both.

Even if you have a Velcro-dog, quality, one-on-one time where your attention is focused on your dog is essential. This quality time should not consist of babying, stroking, or cuddling. Instead, it should consist of doing things to build a strong master/dog relationship and bolster the confidence of your Chihuahua. Fun obedience work using positive reinforcement, interspersed with fun games of fetch, chase, and hide & seek can be very beneficial for the psychological well-being of your Chihuahua.

Using a crate

A crate is another good way to prevent or cure separation anxiety in Chihuahua.

Start by introducing your dog to his crate.

Crate him for short periods while you are present. Gradually increase the time crated. Reward quiet behavior with calm praise and perhaps a treat such as a piece of dog food (a healthier option than most treats).

Start leaving your puppy alone – start with just a few minutes at a time, if possible.

Gradually increase the time spent alone.

Limit your attention when you are home so it isn't such a shock when you leave.

Reward your Chihuahua with a piece of food and attention when he lies quietly away from you.

Most Chihuahua's don't need to be crated forever, but don't rush freedom. Most Chihuahua's aren't ready to be given unsupervised freedom in your home until they are a year-and-a-half or older.

For those of you who work, consider hiring a walker or neighbor to give your Chihuahua a midday break. Keeping your schedule similar on weekends as on workdays can help make things easier for your dog.

Exercise - and plenty of it - helps dogs who must be alone long hours.

Do's and don'ts

Do make leaving and arriving uneventful. If you make leaving a big production – lots of hugs and goodbyes or asking if he'll miss you – your Chihuahua will assume it's a big deal.

When you return, don't go directly to his crate or room and make a fuss except if your Chihuahua is a young pup or has been left for many hours. In those cases, take him right out as he may really need to relieve himself and making him wait can lead to a wet crate. If you can, wait until your dog is calm and quiet, then casually go greet him and praise him for being calm and quiet.

Always give your Chihuahua puppy an opportunity to eliminate prior to crating him and provide him with an appropriate chew toy.

Signs of serious separation anxiety

Some Chihuahua's, especially puppies, may whine or cry a little when left alone. True separation anxiety is defined as destructive or disruptive behavior, including tearing up the room, constant barking and whining, or housetraining mistakes every time you leave – often starting immediately after you leave. For cases where the strategy above doesn't work, you may want to consult a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional.



Whining

In the middle of the night, at the dinner table, at the door – whining is annoying. Learn what whining means and how to correct it.

Why Chihuahua dogs whine

People often try to comfort whining dogs. But in reality, your Chihuahua is often demanding something – and when you give it, you've just taught him that whining works!

Whining can mean many things, but it almost always means your dog wants something:

A Chihuahua whining when you are sitting down to eat is probably saying, 'Give me your food.'

A Chihuahua whining at the back door or bedroom door is probably saying, 'I want to come in.'

A Chihuahua whining in his kennel or crate at night is probably saying, 'I want out now!'

A housetrained Chihuahua whining while inside may be saying, 'I need to go outside!'

What to do

What you want to do is establish when whining is OK (rarely) and when it is not okay (most of the time). When your Chihuahua understands that, he's less likely to whine. As always, the following tips are more effective the sooner you do them:

If your Chihuahua is whining to go out and go to the bathroom, be sure to comply. Go out, take care of business, and come back in with no play.

In all other cases of whining, be strong. Don't give in.

When your Chihuahua whines, give him something productive to do like 'sit' or 'down' - have him do several commands in a row and then praise him calmly.

Try to notice the sweet sounds of silence and praise your Chihuahua then. If he gets attention for being quiet, he should start weaning off the whining.

Make your Chihuahua's crate a comfortable den so your dog will like time there.

Make it cozy and include toys. Crate him for short periods, often, so he learns to accept it calmly.

If your Chihuahua suddenly starts whining “out of the blue,” take him to the veterinarian. He may be in pain.

What NOT to do

Don't give in! Every time your Chihuahua gets what he wants when he whines, you teach him that whining works. Like people, dogs do what works so he'll whine more and longer next time. Do it enough times and your Chihuahua will view whining as the best way to get what he wants. Also, avoid giving in after holding out for a long time. If your dog or new puppy whines when left alone for the night, and you let him whine for three hours and then give in, your Chihuahua will think that whining for three hours is the best way to get your attention (which is what your pup wanted in the first place.)



Chihuahua Toys And Games

Foods, treats or praise will bring out the best responses from your Chihuahua's during training.

Treats can come in the form of their favorite food, toy or something the Chihuahua really loves to do.

Whenever practicing any obedience training and upon finishing, one owner and his Chihuahua will have a big play time by running and throwing his favorite toys. Other Chihuahuas prefer to go for rides, enjoying the wind in their faces, or even playing football!

Some Chihuahuas will take the commands in training with great joy knowing that they will get something to eat!

Some favorites are ice cream, cheese, ham and chicken. One Chihuahua fancies a handful of ice cubes to crunch on though he's not thirsty.

The all time dog favorites of fetching and hide and seek games can be made more treasured using your Chihuahua's favorite ball or toy, and giving him plenty of stroking in between throws.



Exercise And Play

Chihuahua dogs typically need 25-45 minutes, of exercise a day whether it is a brisk walk, or chasing a ball.

Outdoor space is essential for Chihuahuas. In the coldest part of the winter, that can be a challenge. Always have your dog's health evaluated by his veterinarian before you begin an exercise program.

Always check with your veterinarian before starting a new and demanding activity with your Chihuahua. Once you get the go ahead - have fun!

Some ways to make exercise and play a part of your dog's life:

Check with breeders and dog clubs for direction. Ask when the next obedience or agility classes will start and enter your Chihuahua just for the fun of it.

Even if he is already trained, attending a refresher class will give him an

opportunity to interact with other dogs and focus some of his energy into an appropriate behavior.

In the winter, wrap up warm and go for a walk. Even a short walk is preferable to no walk. Find a place with a windbreak and dress appropriately.

Treadmills are trendy for people and can be fun for dogs. You can teach your dog how to walk on the treadmill. Don't ever leave your Chihuahua unattended, don't allow the leash to dangle where it could tangle and, like you, build up his endurance slowly.

Have your veterinarian instruct you how to detect possible warning signs, which may indicate your Chihuahua has exercised too much.

Do

Consider your Chihuahua's needs and present physical condition. Leisurely walks are best for a Chihuahua. However, Chihuahua puppies should not stress their growing bones, joints or muscles through excessive jumping or strenuous exercise. Be sensible about what you ask your Chihuahua to do. Hard games of fetch may stress a dog's joints to the maximum.

Go slow! If you have not exercised your Chihuahua regularly and decide to launch a regular exercise program, begin with short periods of activity at slow speeds and gradually increase the time, speed and distance.

Begin walking your Chihuahua on soft surfaces such as dirt, sand or grass until his pads toughen. Keep your dog's nails trimmed so they won't tear as he runs.

Keep your Chihuahua on a leash; it gives you control when walking or running, and safeguards him from possible dangers such as running on the road or into traffic.

If you exercise at night, place a reflective collar on your Chihuahua, use a bright colored leash and wear white or light-colored clothing so the two of you can be seen.

Check your Chihuahua's feet for the presence of burrs, grass, thorns, rocks or ice and snow, all of which should be removed immediately.

Check carefully for ticks after exercising outdoors. Read more about ticks.

Obey local laws about cleaning up after your dog and using a leash. Your police department or animal control department can tell you more about laws in your area.

Don't

Exercise your Chihuahua immediately before or after he has eaten; a full stomach may cause digestive upsets. Provide only small amounts of water before and directly after exercise.

Go out in the noonday sun. Long walks in the heat is dangerous for Chihuahua. Just because he is willing to walk with you in 90-degree heat doesn't mean it is safe for him to do so.

Raise a couch potato. Chihuahua's can live longer, healthier lives if kept lean and fit. If you love your dog, you'll exercise him.



Games To Play With Chihuahua Puppies

Games are fun, but they can also teach your Chihuahua puppy valuable skills like retrieving, searching, and obedience. Depending on your puppy's personality and temperament, you can teach your puppy variations of games as vast as your imagination.

Fetch is a favorite game and can be useful for reinforcing the "coming when called" command, as well as teaching your puppy to bring the newspaper or your slippers if you are so inclined.

Find-the-toy type games teach your puppy to rely on his sense of smell and use his brain. They can also prepare your puppy for tracking.

Tug is a natural instinct but be careful. When you remember that each game teaches your Chihuahua something, you will realize that tug teaches your Chihuahua to fight with you. If your puppy has a dominant streak the game may get out of hand. Make sure you are the one to start and finish this game and that your puppy drops the toy on command.

Agility games are a great way to burn off extra calories and energy. They also increase your puppy's coordination and confidence. Chihuahua's love the challenge of jumping and negotiating obstacles as well as getting the praise you give when they do well. But before you start, be sure to find a trainer who understands that Chihuahua puppies should not be stressing their growing bones, joints or muscles through excessive jumping or strenuous exercise.

In the end, games are about a connection between you and your puppy. Sure, your puppy has toys that are fun and provide entertainment. But games include you, and that's the best as far as your puppy is concerned.



Dog Sports

Dog sports are increasing in popularity every year. More and more events are being televised, from agility contests to dog shows, and there really is something for every dog (and person) to participate in and enjoy. That being said, the Chihuahua breed is not typically a dog you see in sporting events, due to the fact that he is small and his structure is far more fragile than the average breed.

Choosing a Sport

In order to choose a sport, you have to know a little about each one. Here's a short description of some of the more common dog events:

Agility

Dogs race over, through and around obstacles as quickly as possible with the human keeping up and giving the directions. Most dogs and people can enjoy learning the basics of this sport even if competition is not a goal. Different size dogs jump different height jumps, so many toy breeds can compete with great success. Read more about Agility Courses.

Flyball

A canine relay race where a dog races over a series of jumps, grabs a tennis ball and races back. When one dog crosses the finish line, the next dog in the team starts. Jump size is set for the shortest member of the team, so most teams include a fast, small dog.

Big Air/Diving Dog

A relatively new event, this sport involves a dog racing down a dock and leaping into the water for a thrown object. The longest leap wins.

Flying Disc

This is a sport for truly athletic dogs like the Jack Russell Terrier. Leaping in the air and vaulting off the handler's back makes for great entertainment, but these moves are extremely demanding. The dog is landing hard and often, twisting and turning in every direction, making injury a real risk. Make sure your veterinarian approves before starting.

Conformation

This is what most people think of when they hear “dog show” – a contest to see which purebred dog most closely conforms to its breed standard. Some of the largest shows are now televised, so everyone can enjoy the glamour of these events.

Obedience

While many of us struggle to get our dogs to sit, obedience competitors teach their dogs a complex series of behaviors on which they are judged.

Other activities

There are numerous other sports in which to participate: pet assisted therapy, ski-joring, tracking, herding, Rally-O, dancing with dogs, hunt tests, backpacking, carting, swim tests, earth dog tests, sledding and much, much more are all available. Conduct a little research, invest your time and energy in training and you and your dog can join in the fun.

Things to Consider

Age

Chihuahua dogs need to be fully mature to start doing strenuous physical activity, but do not let that stop you from starting to teach your pup the basics of the sport you’re interested in early. Just work with a sensible trainer and take things easy until your veterinarian tells you it is safe for your Chihuahua to compete.

Soundness

A strong body is a requirement for many sports. No matter what your dream is, if your Chihuahua doesn’t enjoy it, then it is time to adjust your plans. You and your dog are a team. It is your job to make sure your Chihuahua is safe, pain-free and happy.

Time to devote

The more strenuous the sport, the more time is needed both for training and for conditioning your Chihuahua to peak physical condition. Training or competing with a dog that is not in top physical form can lead to injury. So your choices are to devote the time needed to succeed, participate in a less intense way or find another sport that you can more easily work into your schedule.

Few things are as rewarding as competing with your Chihuahua, having all your months and years of training come together seamlessly so you both do your best. Win or lose, such moments are among the rewards of Chihuahua

ownership.



Good Toys For A Chihuahua Puppy

One of your Chihuahua puppy's "jobs" is to chew. It may relieve some of the pain of teething, it may be the practice of feeding skills, it may be just something to do, but chewing is a huge part of puppy's first year. Your job is to supply appropriate toys for chewing so he won't choose your shoes.

Squeaky toys, rattling toys, and those with bells are great fun. Most such toys are also destructible, so monitor your puppy if he has moved into a destructive phase. Squeakers and nylon pieces are better in the toy and as part of the toy than in your puppy - so don't let him chew and swallow any pieces. It is a good idea to keep a close eye on your dog when he or she has a toy, to make sure that they are safe. **All toys, no matter how safe you may think they are, or are advertised, can be dangerous.**

Toys made of hard rubber are sturdy and come in various shapes and sizes. Insert a biscuit treat or peanut butter into rubber toys with holes, and puppy will be highly entertained. To aid in cleaning puppy's teeth, choose dental toys or chews that are made with bumps and grooves.

Be sure to rotate the toys puppy plays with each week. Otherwise, he may get bored with them and ignore them in favor of something new, like the sheetrock or your sneakers.

Remember, the all time dog favorites of fetching and hide and seek games can be made more treasured using your Chihuahua's favorite ball or toy, and giving him plenty of stroking in between throws.

Favorite Chihuahua toys include:

- Ropes
- Strong rubber chew toys
- Soft Frisbees
- Latex or vinyl squeaky toys

As a word of caution, when purchasing and giving toys to you Chihuahua, make sure you pay close attention to the condition of the toy. Remember, Chihuahua can chew through just about anything; you won't want your dog ingesting or choking on any small chewed off pieces.



Feeding Your Chihuahua

Giving your Chihuahua a raw, natural diet (as opposed to commercially prepared one) makes the feeding task flexible and you get to control the quality of the food your Chihuahua is getting.

The Biologically Appropriate Raw Food or “BARF” diet is easy to prepare. You are basically feeding him “bones and raw food”, adding in or taking out supplement as needed.

It is better to first understand the principles behind this feeding method. And there are excellent reference books available on this subject matter.

Basically, the BARF diet is made up of raw meat and raw meaty bones, raw processed vegetables plus dairy products, eggs, fish, offal, muscle meats, fruit and maybe some supplements. It is a very balanced diet and you get to control the ingredients as well as the quality. Some people leave out dairy products or grains.

On the other hand, an owner suggests that you keep a Chihuahua healthy with occasional yogurt treats.

Chihuahua’s tend to have lots of food allergies. One owner put an ailing and lethargic Chihuahua on a strictly venison diet and your dog finally thrived, gained weight and became very active.

There is also a recent concern about eating a large amount of grapes or raisins, since they can be toxic to dogs, leading to acute kidney failure.

The reports concerning this grape/raisin poisoning have only just surfaced and the information is still sketchy at best. The Animal Poison Control Center in the US is investigating this new medical development.

Some questions remaining to be answered are:

- How much grapes or raisins eaten could become toxic to your dog?
- What is the toxic substance?
- How does it affect the kidney?

To be safe, have your veterinarian check your Chihuahua if he has eaten a large amount of grapes or raisins because a healthy kidney is key to its survival.



More On Choosing Dog Food For Your Chihuahua

Even before your Chihuahua comes home, you should decide on a dog food. It has to be healthy, tasty and it has to fit your lifestyle.

Nutritional claims

Read the label for nutritional claims.

Look for life stage claims. For example, a puppy food should say it is complete and balanced for "growth" or "all life stages". Foods balanced for "the maintenance of an adult dog" won't give a puppy enough nutrition.

Types of food

There is a wide variety of commercially produced dog food available in a variety of styles. Choose the one that fits your needs, your Chihuahua's needs and your budget.

Dry food is an extremely popular choice for Chihuahua puppy owners. It tastes good, is easy to store, and has more nutrition per pound on a dry matter basis than other types. It also helps keep teeth clean.

Soft and moist food is increasing in popularity. Moist chunks are enjoyable for your dog to eat, meaning he's likely to eat all his food and get all the needed nutrition.

Canned foods are the most palatable for your Chihuahua. However, due to their high water content, they contain less nutrition per pound of food, so you will need to feed your Chihuahua a higher volume. Also watch for dental issues - soft foods don't scrape the teeth like dry diets.

Guaranteed analysis

Look at the levels of calories, protein, fat, and other nutrients in a food declared on the package. You can compare these analyses between foods as long as they are foods of the same type; for example, all canned foods will have less protein per pound or cup than dry food because canned foods contain so much moisture, so in this case you need to compare them by daily feeding amount - you will feed more of the canned food per day. But you can compare dry to dry or canned to canned.

While this comparison might help you select in some circumstances - for example, you may want to feed an overweight dog a food with less calories per

cup or a hardworking dog a food with more calories per cup - your best bet is to use the nutritional claims and look for a food that is appropriate for your dog's life stage. More or less of a particular nutrient may be good or it may not - too much calcium can lead to bone problems, for example (read more about these types of nutritional balances in About Minerals).

Other considerations

Since this is a decision you want to make once and stick with, consider other aspects of the food including:

- Flavor - does your dog seem to enjoy it?
- Availability - can you get your chosen food easily?
- Cost - does it fit comfortably in your monthly budget?
- Reputation - do you know people who have used and recommend the food? Is the manufacturer reputable?
- Special needs - if your dog has specific nutritional needs identified by a veterinarian, does this food meet those needs?
- With these guidelines, you can find the food that's right for you and your dog.



Pet Food Labels

Pet food labels provide the pet owner with a great deal of information. But what do they mean? When evaluating potential diets for your Chihuahua, you may want to know more about what you are reading. Here is a rundown of many of the types of information you may find on a dog food label.

Caloric statement

Dog food labels may have a statement of the calorie content of the product. Calories are stated in terms of metabolizable kilocalories per kilogram (ME kcal/kg) of food and may also be expressed as calories per unit of household measure such as per cup or per can.

Manufacturers may determine the calorie content of their product through calculations based on laboratory analysis of the product or through feeding trial procedures established by AAFCO (The Association of American Feed Control Officials, an independent body that sets guidelines for the pet food industry.)

Additives

Two types of additives are included in pet food products; those that are nutritional and those that add other benefits.

Nutritional additives include vitamins, minerals, fats and amino acids. They permit the supplementation of a product to increase single nutrient levels without disturbing the levels of other nutrients in the diet.

An animal's body cannot distinguish between vitamins that occur in natural ingredients and those which are produced synthetically. The use of synthetic nutrients helps achieve the high degree of nutritional balance found in good-quality pet foods.

The pet food label lists a number of ingredients which do not necessarily provide nutrient benefits, but which do have a specific purpose in the diet. These types of additives are detailed below:

- **Antioxidants** - Ingredients such as mixed tocopherols are added to the fats in pet foods at extremely low levels to prevent rancidity and, thus, prevent the unpleasant odor, loss of palatability, and destruction of vitamins that can occur when fats go rancid.
- **Chemical preservatives** - Preservatives are used in semi-moist-type pet foods to prevent spoilage. These include such ingredients as propylene glycol, sorbic acid, and potassium sorbate. All ingredients of this type must be approved by the FDA for use and are identified as a preservative.
- **Flavoring agents** - Flavorings are a convenient way to make products more appealing to dogs. Some may have complicated chemical names, but others such as garlic and onion are also used as flavoring agents.
- **Coloring** - Colors are added to some pet foods to help maintain a consistent product appearance because the color of natural ingredients can vary, or to distinguish between flavors in a multi-particle food. Artificial colors used in pet foods are the same as those approved for use in human foods and are approved by the FDA.

Feeding directions

Information in this section should also include the amount of food recommended, which will be a "rule of thumb" or a starting point. Actual feeding amounts will depend on age, activity, size, environment and body metabolism and is best determined by you observing your Chihuahua's body condition.

Dog food labeled as complete and balanced for any or all life stages is required to list feeding directions for each lifestage declared on the product label. These

directions are expressed in common terms and appear prominently on the label.

Guaranteed analysis

Certain nutrient guarantees are required on the label of all pet foods. These are:

- % Crude protein (minimum amount)
- % Crude fat (minimum amount)
- % Crude fiber (maximum amount)
- % Moisture (maximum amount)

If the manufacturer desires to list any additional guarantees such as vitamins and minerals, in the units defined by AAFCO, these will be shown after moisture.

The reason for the word crude is that the minimum or maximum amount shown is determined by lab assay and is not the amount actually utilized by the animal. Consequently, figures given in the guaranteed analyses do not necessarily indicate nutritional balance or product quality.

Ingredient listing

All ingredients used in the manufacture of the pet food shall be listed in the ingredient list on the label. The ingredients shall be listed in descending order of predominance by weight. No reference can be given to ingredient quality or grade in the ingredient list. The names of all ingredients must be shown in letters that are the same size, color and type.



Nutrition For Chihuahua Puppies

The nutritional needs of Chihuahua puppies are greater than at any time in a Chihuahua's life other than reproduction. Understanding what your puppy needs will help you make the right dietary choices.

What happens

The puppy stage sets the foundation for a Chihuahua's whole life. The length of this period can vary, the rule of thumb is 18 months for Chihuahua's. A lot of physical development happens in a very short time, including:

- Bones and joints growing to full size
- Muscles developing and growing

- Internal organs growing (this continues even after your dog appears to be full size)
- Immune system developing and learning to protect
- Cognitive development and brain growth

Chihuahua puppy's nutritional needs

Supporting that level of development – similar to what a human goes through from birth to 14 years of age – in just one or two years takes the right level of nutrition. This includes:

- **Protein** – A key building block of muscle, skin, coat, organs and other tissues. During this period of growth, a puppy needs abundant protein
- **Calcium and Phosphorus** – Necessary ingredients for healthy bones and teeth. They must be present in the correct ratios to grow bones and teeth correctly
- **Omega Fatty Acids, including Linoleic acid** – Provides complete and balanced nutrition, promotes a healthy immune system and helps keep your puppy's skin and coat healthy

These are not the only needs of a puppy, of course. What your Chihuahua puppy eats will need to supply all of these and more. And how the ingredients are mixed is important as well.

Do's and don'ts

Be sure to follow the feeding guidelines. One of the worst things you can do is allow your puppy to become overweight – it has serious health implications.

Don't feed your puppy from the table. People food often adds calories and unneeded fat to a Chihuahua's diet, and it can make your puppy into a finicky eater.

When you change foods, gradually mix the new food in with the old over two weeks. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on your puppy.

Feed at the same times every day; 3 times a day for young Chihuahua puppies, 2 times per day for older puppies, and 1 time per day for adults (this amount can be broken into 2 or more feedings per day.)



Nutrition For Adult Chihuahua Dogs

When a Chihuahua reaches full maturity, it enters the maintenance period. The objective of feeding at this time is to maintain a healthy body condition while supplying needed nutrients and energy.

Feeding basics

Normal healthy dogs who are not pregnant, nursing, or hardworking have relatively low nutritional requirements for maintaining an appropriate body condition. Unlike Chihuahua puppies, who are developing into their adult bodies, adult Chihuahua's need to keep the bodies they have healthy and strong.

If your Chihuahua doesn't have these conditions, you want to feed a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food in amounts that will keep your Chihuahua in ideal body condition. A good body condition is one in which the animal is well proportioned, with an observable waist behind the ribcage, and ribs that can be felt with a slight fat covering over them.

Tips for proper feeding

Choose a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food.

Providing a proper diet for an adult Chihuahua can be straightforward and simple without the need for supplements of any kind.

If supplemental meat or table scraps are fed, they should account for no more than 10% of the total diet.

For Chihuahua's with lower caloric needs and/or for Chihuahua's that are less active, attention should be paid to the potential for excessive weight gain.

Often a Chihuahua's weight can be reduced simply by eliminating table scraps and treats from the diet and by avoiding high-energy dog foods.

Feeding recommendations for adult Chihuahua's can vary, depending upon the dogs activity, metabolism and owner's preference.

Whether or not an animal is fed once or twice each day, it should be fed at the same time, and fresh drinking water should always be made available.

A Chihuahua appetite may vary from day to day and should not be a concern unless the loss of appetite persists or your Chihuahua shows signs of illness or weight loss. In these situations your Chihuahua should be examined by a veterinarian.

Switching foods

Dogs, including Chihuahua's, do not need variety in their diet. In fact, it is best to switch foods as little as possible to avoid creating a finicky eater. But when you do need to change foods (such as when your Chihuahua turns 5 years old for and starts eating senior food), gradually mix the new food in with the old over 7 - 10 days. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on your dog.



Nutrition For Hardworking Chihuahua Dogs

Hardworking Chihuahua dogs need much more nutrition than a typical Chihuahua. These dogs will need special diets and feeding schedules to support the exertions of their work and training.

Is your Chihuahua dog hardworking?

The first step in deciding your Chihuahua's diet is to figure out if he truly is a "hardworking dog." If he spends most of the week indoors and then goes out for a vigorous run or long play session on the weekends, a normal diet will probably suffice, with maybe a little extra on exercise days to make up for the calories he'll burn off.

On the other hand, if your Chihuahua spends several days a week out in the open running around, dietary adjustments may be in order.

Feeding hardworking dogs

Usually, you will want a nutritionally dense food with 27 percent protein, 1,850 digestible calories per pound and a 12 percent fat recommendation.

Hardworking Chihuahua dogs often will need to be fed twice a day to keep up body condition. In addition, it is a good idea to keep handfuls of food with you when out in activity to give your dog a "pick-me-up" during the day.

Some people feed their Chihuahua's candy to maintain energy and blood sugar. This can be dangerous because of the canine problems associated with large amounts of chocolate. Talk to your veterinarian if you think you will need to give your dog a special boost. Your veterinarian can recommend products designed for this need.

Don't feed immediately before or after hard work. Make sure there is always

plenty of water, but regulate it before and after exercise so your dog doesn't get sick. Keep the water cool, but not cold.

In cold weather, you may need to feed your Chihuahua extra just to keep warm. The rule of thumb is 7.5 percent more calories than normal for every drop of 10 degrees from normal.

In the off season

One of the challenges for feeding working or busy Chihuahua's is what to do in the off-season or Winter if you (and he are not so active). There are two schools of thought: feed your Chihuahua less of the protein-dense food, which avoids a food transition but can leave your dog feeling hungry when the volume is reduced; or feed your Chihuahua the same amount of a less-dense food, which keeps your Chihuahua full but can result in finicky eating if he prefers one over the other. The best thing to do in either case is make the transition slowly over a 7 - 10 day period.



Nutrition For Inactive Chihuahua Dogs

Chihuahua Dogs that don't get much exercise don't need as many calories as Chihuahua's that do. You should pay attention to your Chihuahua's energy level, potential reasons your dog's energy level might change and things you can do to keep your less active Chihuahua fit.

Inactive Chihuahua's are more likely to put on extra pounds since they don't burn as many calories. This puts them at risk for obesity, which carries with it a greater risk for a variety of health ailments. Learn more about Obesity.

What Is an inactive Chihuahua?

There is no precise definition for an inactive Chihuahua, but you probably can tell if your dog fits this category. Inactive Chihuahua's don't get much exercise and often don't seem to have much interest in exercise - Chihuahua's that prefer to sleep, don't run when they go outside or tend to move as little as possible most likely fit this category.

Why is a Chihuahua inactive?

Chihuahua Dogs might be inactive for a variety of reasons:

- **Age:** As Chihuahua's grow older, their energy level tends to drop.

- **Illness or Injury:** Physical ailments can make it harder to move as much. These might be temporary slowdowns, but adjustments should still be made.
- **Overweight:** Chihuahua's that are overweight may tend to be less active. This can create a dangerous spiral. The more overweight, the less active, and the less active, the more overweight.

Feeding an inactive Chihuahua

If you have an inactive Chihuahua, you should try to feed the right amount of calories for your dog's activity level. If your Chihuahua is in ideal body condition and isn't gaining weight, you're feeding the right amount. But if your dog has become less active while his feeding has remained the same and he's getting overweight, try these tips:

1. First, cut back on treats and snacks. These are generally high in calories and may contribute to weight gain.
2. The second step can be to feed less of the animal's regular pet food. Measure the amount of food that's put into the pet's dish to prevent the serving size from increasing over time.
3. Third, owners can increase a Chihuahua's exercise with additional walks or playtime each day. This helps you the owner as well as your Chihuahua, and has the additional benefit of increasing the amount of time you spend together.
4. Finally, you could consider switching to a reduced-calorie food. These products are designed to allow you to serve a nice-size portion while still reducing the calories the animal eats.

It is always a good idea to consult with a veterinarian before changing a Chihuahua's diet. The veterinarian can help tailor program for an individual pet and can track progress and help troubleshoot along the way.



Nutrition For Senior Chihuahua's

When Chihuahua's move into their senior years – usually defined as 7 years of age or older – they can often benefit from a diet tailored to their particular lifestage. Here are some ways to tell what your Chihuahua needs and how to provide it.

Signs of a senior Chihuahua dog

By the most common definition, Chihuahua's cross into their senior years when they enter the final 25% of their expected lifespan.

As a good rule of thumb, you should start looking for the Seven Signs of Senior at about seven years of age. Those signs include:

1. Graying muzzle or coat – or other coat conditions that weren't there before
2. Slowing down and staying down – less energy, trouble getting up or limping
3. Sleeping more – a common side effect of aging
4. Changing habits – including play preferences and eating or drinking habits
5. Change in weight – some dogs gain weight as they age while others lose
6. Bad breath – a sign of dental and gum problems, sometimes exacerbated by age
7. Hearing or vision changes – like humans, senses can dull over time

If you see these signs, you should consult your veterinarian. There may be options to treat or reduce the symptoms. Also, these signs could also be related to another issue besides aging that your veterinarian might catch.

Feeding a senior Chihuahua dog

If you have a generally healthy Chihuahua over seven years of age, your dog may benefit from a properly balanced senior dog food. Older Chihuahua's sometimes have different needs than adult Chihuahua's, and foods can be tailored to help meet those needs. Consult your veterinarian for more information.

One changing need that should be tracked is reduced activity level, a common

sign of aging. Less active animals may have reduced energy requirements. Over-feeding may predispose animals to obesity, which is associated with various physical disorders. For these reasons, it is particularly important to feed older dogs according to their individual needs and to maintain a healthy body condition.

Also note that older Chihuahua's may have difficulty chewing as a result of dental issues. In this situation, you may want to moisten dry food to make it more palatable.



Treats In A Balanced Diet

Treats are a popular tool to use in training, and many people like to give their Chihuahua's little tidbits of food as a way to show affection. But from a nutritional point of view, treats can be problematic. If the treats are too rich, your Chihuahua can develop an upset stomach. Feed too many, and you could be on your way to an overweight dog.

Chihuahua's get all of the nutrition they need and all the calories they need from a complete and balanced dog food. Treats that are given in addition to a Chihuahua's regular diet add calories, fat and extra nutrients that may not be good for your dog.

Nevertheless, some favorites are, cooked pasta noodles, ice cream, cheese, meats (ham and chicken). On hot days Chihuahua's are also known to fancy a handful of ice cubes to crunch on. Be very careful to give only tiny amounts of these treats, (except for the ice cubes) because your small dog has a small stomach. Moreover, small stomachs tend to be much more sensitive than their larger counterparts. Be very mindful what you give your dog, and when you give him something for the first time, watch for any possible negative reactions such as hyperactivity, lethargy, vomiting, and soft stools or diarrhea.

The risks of excessive treats

The extra calories contained in dog treats and people food can be a leading issue in giving treats. These extra calories, if not burned off through extra play and exercise, can lead to weight gain and even obesity, which carries with it increased risk of a number of dangerous issues.

In addition to extra calories and fat, people food can also raise a host of additional problems. The wrong food in the wrong doses can result in unexpected consequences. To avoid these, the safest thing to do is never supplement your Chihuahua's diet with people food.

Responsible use of treats for Chihuahua's

A safe way to use food as treats is to measure out your Chihuahua's daily allowance of kibble in the morning and dip into that for training treats. This way you can give your dog a food reward for a job well done while not worrying about causing any problems.

Of course, it is possible to use manufactured dog treats responsibly. Simply remember that if you feed your Chihuahua treats, they should be low fat and you must reduce your dog's caloric intake accordingly to accommodate for the extra calories.

When training, you want to work away from giving a food reward every time. Sometimes you will want your dog to sit but you won't have any food. So start gradually replacing the treat with praise. Once your dog has learned a command, give the treat every other time, then every third time.

Make sure your praise is lavish every time, with or without a treat. Pretty soon, your puppy will work for praise - and the occasional snack.



Supplements

Some people worry that their Chihuahua's aren't getting all the nutrition they need. They may supplement their Chihuahua's diets with people food or with vitamin or mineral supplements similar to those many humans take. But if you're already feeding a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food for the appropriate lifestage, these supplements are unnecessary and could possibly be harmful.

When it comes to providing optimum nutrition for Chihuahua's, reputable pet food manufacturers have done the work for us. Research scientists have formulated commercial diets containing all the nutrients normal, healthy dogs need for a particular life stage. For Chihuahua's with certain health conditions, there are special dog foods that are designed to help address those issues. Your veterinarian can help you choose the right food.

People food

Supplementing with human food adds calories to a pet's diet, may lead to an obese Chihuahua and can unbalance a pet's diet. People food can lead to other issues depending on the food and the amounts in which it is fed.

Vitamin and mineral supplements for Chihuahua's

Vitamin and mineral supplements are best left to the experts. For example, some Chihuahua owners believe that additional calcium, and possibly other minerals, should be added to the diets of pregnant and nursing females and growing puppies.

It is true that more minerals are needed at these times, but they are normally obtained through increased consumption of a high quality nutritionally balanced diet. Adding them out of proportion to other nutrients can create skeletal deformities and other problems. Learn more about the interactions of minerals.

Always talk to your veterinarian if you think supplements may be needed. Your veterinarian can make that call, and if they are needed, will prescribe the right minerals in the right amounts.



Weight Gain

As a symptom, weight gain can point to a few different issues, but the cause is always the same: Your Chihuahua is consuming more calories than it is burning. The cause is usually very mundane - overfeeding by the owner - but the effects can be serious. Do not write weight gain off as a harmless issue.

Determining weight gain

The truth is, 'weight gain' is not really the issue. Chihuahua's, like people, can and should gain weight at certain times - puppyhood is the obvious example. As a Chihuahua puppy gets larger and fills out, you are going to see some weight gain.

The real problem to watch for is changes in body condition. It is very important that you learn how to evaluate your Chihuahua's body condition and monitor it from puppyhood on.

Risks of weight gain

When extra weight adds up over time, it can lead to obesity, which can result in certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. Learn more about problems associated with Obesity and ways to address them.

If you determine that your Chihuahua is overfed, the cause is almost always

overfeeding and/or lack of exercise. But there can be root causes, such as injury, illness, aging or changes in metabolism. These conditions might carry their own risks above and beyond weight gain.

How to address weight gain in Chihuahua's

Since most weight gain comes from too much food or too little exercise, start with these easy steps:

Follow the guidelines on the Body Condition and Obesity pages, including eliminating table scraps, reducing treats, and reducing the amount you feed.

If you think you might want to try a reduced calorie food, consult your veterinarian about the best course to take.

If the weight gain is sudden or there is no clear cause, or if usual weight loss or maintenance practices don't seem to help (for example, if your Chihuahua has trouble exercising more), go to your veterinarian. There may be other conditions that need treatment or analysis.



Obesity

Obesity is the number one nutritional disorder among Chihuahua's. Studies suggest that approximately 25 percent of the Chihuahua's presented to veterinary clinics are overweight. This extra weight puts pets at risk for certain health problems. Know how to recognize obesity, what causes it, and how to correct – or better yet, prevent – it.

Definition of obesity

Chihuahua Dogs that have an accumulation of body fat that puts them 20% or more over ideal body weight are considered obese. These dogs often have fat deposits over the thorax, spine and the base of the tail, as well as the neck and limbs.

Obesity is a major concern because it disposes a Chihuahua to certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. And as revealed in a study by Nestlé Purina, dogs fed to a lean body condition may live longer than dogs allowed to eat more freely.

Recognizing obesity

Owners are so familiar with the appearance of their Chihuahua's that they often fail to recognize obesity unaided. Try these techniques, and if you think your dog may be obese or aren't sure, have your veterinarian take a look.

- **Rib check:** Place both of your thumbs on your dog's backbone and spread both hands across his rib cage. On an obese dog, you won't be able to feel the ribs through the fat covering, or will only be able to feel them when you exert significant pressure. Actually feeling your dog is important, as the coat of many dogs will make a visual check difficult.
- **Profile check:** Examine your dog's profile – it's best if you are level with the dog. In an obese dog, the stomach will hang down and there will be no abdominal tuck behind the rib cage.
- **Overhead check:** Looking at your dog from overhead, see if you can see a waist behind the ribs. An overweight dog will not have a discernible waist.

It's a good idea to learn more about how to rate your dog's body condition.

Causes of obesity

The simple reason why Chihuahua's gain weight to the point that they become obese is because they are consuming more calories than they burn through exercise and metabolism, but the cause of this discrepancy can have different sources.

Diet and exercise

For Chihuahua's who are simply eating more calories than they burn, there are two ways to impact the animal's weight: feed fewer calories, or increase the amount of exercise the pet gets, thus burning more calories.

Genetic predisposition

Certain breeds seem to be more susceptible to obesity than others including beagles, basset hounds, dachshunds and Labrador retrievers. You must watch the weight of dogs of these breeds more closely. However, Chihuahua's can also be prone to put on weight if you are not careful.

Hormonal disorders

Conditions which impact hormone balances in dogs may contribute to the development of obesity. These include thyroid or pituitary gland dysfunction.

Neutering and spaying may also cause changes in metabolism. You must watch the weight of Chihuahua's with these conditions more closely.

How to correct obesity in Chihuahua's

If you know or suspect your Chihuahua is obese, see your veterinarian before making any significant changes. Your veterinarian will recommend a regimen that includes some or all of the tips below, and will tell you how much your dog can handle and how quickly:

- Eliminate table scraps and treats
- Reduce the amount of food you give your dog
- Increase the amount of exercise your dog gets
- Consider switching to a low-calorie pet food

Preventing obesity in Chihuahua's

As always, the best thing you can do for your Chihuahua is not let him get obese in the first place. Here are some small steps you can take to control your Chihuahua's food intake and calorie expenditure:

- Don't feed table scraps; they are typically high in calories.
- Limit treats. Remember that if you feed your dog treats, they should be low-fat and you must reduce your dog's caloric intake accordingly to accommodate the extra calories.
- Make sure your dog gets exercise regularly, and try to make time for extra.
- Measure servings – don't just eyeball the amount you serve. And don't use an oversized bowl, which makes it easier to overfeed.
- Try feeding two or more smaller meals a day instead of one big meal so your dog feels more satisfied.
- Utilize the feeding guides provided on pet food packages. Remember, these guidelines are averages and you may need to adjust your feedings based on your dog's individual body condition.



Finicky Eating

Sometimes it can be hard to get your Chihuahua to eat his complete and balanced dog food. This can be a problem, especially if it means your dog is not getting enough nutrition or is getting the wrong nutrition from somewhere else.

What Is finicky eating?

As a rule, finicky eating is when your Chihuahua will only eat certain things. It is sometimes manifested in a dog who refuses to eat the complete and balanced dog food you offer or doesn't eat enough. Finicky eaters usually do so out of preference, but you should keep in mind that Chihuahua's might also refuse to eat because of a medical condition.

Also keep in mind environmental factors. Many Chihuahua owners comment that their dogs eat less during hot weather. This is not unusual. Studies show that, as a general rule, dogs need about 7.5 percent fewer calories with each 10 degree rise in temperature.

Change in diet

One possible cause of finicky eating is a sudden change in diet. Some tips on making diet changes more tolerable:

- Before leaving the breeder, pet store, or Humane Society, find out what type, flavor, and brand of food your Chihuahua has been eating. Acquire some of this food.
- If the food your Chihuahua has been eating is acceptable to you, continue feeding it.
- If you want to switch your Chihuahua to a new food at any time, begin with a day or two of feeding the same food he had before.
- Then mix that food with your chosen brand or flavor for a few days, slowly decreasing the amount of old food and increasing the amount of new. This should take about a week or a little more.
- Do this any time you change foods or your dog may develop gastrointestinal upset.

Making food more palatable

If your Chihuahua doesn't like the new food, hang in there and try to make it more appealing.

- If you've chosen dry food, add a little water to moisten it.
- If you serve a moist food, warm it a little.
- Allow your Chihuahua time to adjust.

If he still won't eat it, you may want to try a new food. This causes finicky behavior.

If he won't eat that, have a talk with your veterinarian. You may be experiencing a complete refusal to eat.

Mix a little wet with the dry to entice. Slowly decrease wet until he's back to only dry.

Scheduling and controlling diet

An indulgent family member rather than your Chihuahua may be the problem. By feeding human treats and food from the table, your Chihuahua's hunger is satisfied with all this people food and it either refuses to eat or nibbles only a few bites of the food it should be eating.

Don't feed your Chihuahua people food and if you feed treats, do so sparingly and reduce the amount of complete and balanced dog food you offer to accommodate the extra calories.

Make sure your Chihuahua isn't eating somewhere else. The garbage can is a common temptation for dogs. Keep garbage out of reach; not only might it reduce your dog's appetite for dog food, it can cause a host of other problems, including diarrhea.

Scheduling specific feeding times throughout the day is beneficial. Your Chihuahua will know when food is coming at will learn to eat at that time.

If none of these tips help, ask your veterinarian to examine your dog for other conditions that may be leading to these eating habits, especially if your dog seems to be unexpectedly losing weight.



Refusal To Eat

Complete refusal to eat can be a sign of a serious problem that will require a veterinarian's attention. But don't rule out that your Chihuahua may just be finicky.

Distinguishing between finicky eating and refusal to eat

Refusal to eat is when your Chihuahua dog completely stops eating the food put before it or eats small amounts only reluctantly.

Finicky eating is often a result of the food options made available to a dog. Your Chihuahua still wants to eat, but it only wants to eat certain things. This can occur when his diet is changed unexpectedly, or when he gets used to certain foods. One example might be a Chihuahua that regularly eats scraps from the table; this dog might eventually refuse dog food because it wants people food.

Finicky eating is a learned behavior and there are certain things you can do to try and address it.

If your Chihuahua refuses to eat

If your Chihuahua simply won't or can't eat, no matter what you try, you must see your veterinarian. This is especially true if your dog starts losing weight. The problem could be anything from sore teeth to serious internal problems, and your veterinarian can diagnose and recommend solutions to the problem.



Sudden Weight Loss

Sudden or unexplained weight loss should be reported to your veterinarian immediately. It can be a sign of a number of issues, some relatively easy to correct, and some quite serious. Don't risk overlooking a potentially serious problem.

Cause of weight loss in a Chihuahua

In very broad terms, weight loss occurs when your Chihuahua is burning more calories than he is consuming. But why this is happening can vary.

- There might be some internal problem that means your dog isn't utilizing the calories he is eating.

- There may be an internal disorder that redirects calories from vital life functions.
- Your dog may not be eating as much, sometimes due to teeth problems that make eating painful.
- Your dog may suddenly be burning more calories. Cold weather makes a dog's body burn calories for warmth, and dogs that are working hard use more calories too.

What to do

Unless the cause is extremely obvious (such as you've started running a great deal with your Chihuahua, but haven't been offering more food), you should consult with your veterinarian. Sudden and unexplained weight loss isn't normal, and you should find the cause before the weight loss causes further problems for your Chihuahua.



Water

Water is the one necessary nutrient not adequately available in a complete and balanced dog food – and it is also one a Chihuahua cannot be healthy without. Owners should have a clean bowl filled with fresh water available to their dogs at all times.

Functions of water

All animals depend on water for life processes. Water is the most important nutrient for survival on a short-term basis, and it is one that is too frequently neglected. Among its functions:

- Water is found inside and outside cells, and is involved in most biochemical reactions within the body.
- Water is essential in helping regulate body temperature.
- Water lubricates body tissues.
- Water is a fluid medium for the blood and lymph systems.

The amount of water a Chihuahua will need depends on the amount of activity he is involved in, the temperature and humidity of the environment, and other factors such as pregnancy and lactation.

Sources of water for Chihuahua dogs

Obviously, most of the water your Chihuahua needs is consumed by drinking it. Some water may also be present in your Chihuahua's food if you feed a canned or semi-moist (chewy) food; however, you should never rely on the water present in food to meet your pet's needs

Providing water

As noted above, plenty of fresh, cool water should be made available at all times. While you might not need to bring water along when you walk around the block, you may want to bring a bottle and a dish to the dog park or when out exercising, especially in warm weather.



Chihuahua Grooming Basics

Proper dog grooming is an important part of Chihuahua care. It not only makes your dog look better, but contributes to his or her physiological and psychological health. Ensuring you have the proper dog grooming supplies will make your dog healthier and your job easier

Unless your Chihuahua is going to be a show dog, and has a smooth coat, he is basically a low-maintenance dog that tends to keep himself clean.

You need only to bathe and/or currycomb it occasionally and tidy up his short, hard coat with a soft brush as the coat does shed. To make a Chihuahua's coat gleam after a bath, rub his coat down with chamois cloth. It works and their coat stays so shiny!

Their nails require regular trimming or could also get naturally worn down by hard surface. Some Chihuahuas are very sensitive about their paws and don't let you touch them.

Have your veterinarian remove tartar from your Chihuahua's teeth periodically, especially as he grows older. You can also learn to do this yourself. Here are some more detailed grooming tips for you and your Chihuahua.

Coat

Brush your Chihuahua thoroughly every day with a soft slicker brush if he has the long-haired coat. If he has the smooth short-haired coat, you can give him a good brush every two weeks if you desire. However, the Chihuahua with the smooth short coat will groom it himself. This is the most basic of dog grooming steps. It helps keep his or her hair in good condition by removing dirt, spreading the natural oils throughout the coat, preventing tangles from forming and keeping the skin clean and free from irritation.

It is best to start brushing your Chihuahua at an early age, but do not despair if he or she is an older animal. It is possible to train one to enjoy dog grooming. Proceed slowly, and be sure to use treats and plenty of praise to make the experience fun!

Nails

Trim your Chihuahua's nails about once per month. You'll need a clipper designed specifically for the kind of companion animal you have. Either a scissor- or guillotine-style clipper can be used. You should also purchase a small bottle of blood-clotting powder.

How to Cut Your Chihuahua's Nails

Have your dog sit beside you. Then place one of his or her paws in your hand and gently pull it forward. If your pet dislikes dog grooming, slowly accustom him or her to it by offering treats and praise.

Gradually shorten one nail. Be sure to stop before you reach the quick, which is the part of the nail that contains nerves and blood vessels. If you cannot see the quick clearly, stop cutting just behind the point at which the nail begins to curve downward.

1. If you cut into the quick, do not panic. Put some clotting powder on a moist cotton swab and press it firmly against the nail for several seconds.
2. Repeat the process until all of your dog's nails have been trimmed.
3. Do not forget to trim the dewclaw, which is located on the inside of each front leg just above the paw. (Keep in mind some dogs do not have dewclaws.)

Ears

Ear care is an important part of dog grooming. Ear infections can not only be painful, but lead to permanent hearing loss. The signs of a problem with a dog's ears include redness, constant scratching, head shaking and odor.

How to Clean Your Chihuahua's Ears

Check your dogs's ears twice per month as part of your dog grooming routine. The skin inside and on the flaps should be pale pink. If there is a foul odor and/or any red, brown or black skin, have a veterinarian examine your pet's ears.

1. Moisten a cotton ball with warm water or a little mineral oil and use it to clean the opening into the canal and the flaps. Do not probe too deeply into the canal.

Teeth

Chihuahua's can get cavities and develop periodontal disease, so their teeth should be cleaned as part of their dog grooming routine.

Here your Chihuahua can do his own dog grooming! Give your dog chews on once or twice a week will go a long way to keeping his teeth clean and healthy.

Otherwise you should clean your dog's teeth with a pet toothpaste regularly. It is best to use a small toothbrush that has soft bristles. Cleanings performed by a veterinarian may also be required.

Bathing

Ensure that bathing forms a regular part of your Chihuahua's grooming routine. Bathe your dog once every two months or as often as needed. Be sure to brush him or her before each bath in order to get all of the mats out of his or her coat.

How to Bathe Your Chihuahua

Place a rubber mat in your bathtub, or a towel in your sink, for secure footing. Then place a cotton ball in each of your companion animal's ears to prevent water from entering.

1. Rinse your pet with warm water. Use a spray hose if one is available, but be sure to keep the nozzle very close to your companion animal's body. Never spray him or her in the face.
2. Apply a shampoo designed especially for pets in small amounts, working from the head to the tail. Be sure to clean the rectum, between the toes, behind the ears and under the chin. Try to avoid getting shampoo in your companion animal's eyes.
3. Thoroughly rinse your pet with warm water.
4. Dry your dog with a towel and/or hair dryer.

"Scooting"

It isn't pretty, and trust me, if your dog does this, you'll want to know what to do. Unfortunately, as sweet as small dogs like Chihuahua's are, they are extremely prone to performing this little gem of a behaviour.

For those of you who know what scooting is, you've likely already said "eww!", and for those of you who don't know...get ready to say it.

Scooting is the term used for the behaviour performed by dogs when he drags his bum along the floor (most preferably carpet).

This action is often an indication of an anal gland problem. The anal glands are located at the sides of the anus and produce a liquid with a terribly offensively odour.

If your Chihuahua suffers from this condition, he may require assistance emptying these glands. This is just as repellent as it sounds and therefore many people chose to have this done by the vet or groomer. If you are familiar with this symptom, you will know why numerous people are willing to part with a few dollars to have this done for them.

The most important thing to know about this condition is that if you think your Chihuahua may have such an anal gland irritation, you should speak with your veterinarian. He or she will be able to diagnose it properly and will be able to recommend the best treatment.



Choose The Right Vet For Your Chihuahua

Choosing the right veterinarian for your Chihuahua is an important decision, because you will want to find someone whom you can trust to diagnose your animal companion should they ever become ill, as well as provide you with the best advice to assist you with treatment options.

After yourself, the most important person in your dog's life is a veterinarian. Take your puppy or dog in for a visit as soon as possible after coming home for the first time. Your veterinarian can check for problems you might miss. And if there is a problem, the sooner treatment starts the better.

When it comes to selecting your vet, you won't want to base your decision on:

- How friendly he or she may be
- How inexpensive he or she is

All that should concern you is how logically the vet thinks, and how well they respond to your dog's condition, so they can help you, help your dog.

There are two different types of veterinarian care that you can choose for your Chihuahua:

- 1. Allopathic Veterinarian:** This is a type of veterinarian whose philosophies are based on treating your dog's symptoms with either some form of drug, medication or chemical. Some people believe that this style of treatment, only adds more stress on your animal companion's immune system, and may lead to other complications or even negative reactions if the chemical wreaks havoc on the dog's other bodily organs.
- 2. Holistic Veterinarian:** This type of veterinarian believes in using natural elements of healing such as herbs used for medicine, vitamins, minerals, acupuncture, antioxidants, enzymes and homeopathy as ways to treat illnesses in animals if they should ever occur. The idea behind this approach is to prevent illness from occurring, by keeping your dog's immune system strong and healthy

Some believe that the holistic approach is the safer and logical choice, but in the end the approach you pick will depend entirely on your beliefs, and what you think will work best for your companion. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and find out detailed information about both veterinarian options before making your final decision.

When you look for a veterinarian, consider the following:

- Recommendation of family and friends – often the best indicator of a good veterinarian
- Cleanliness and orderliness of office – a sign of professionalism and good for your Chihuahua's health
- Proximity to your home – you want to be able to visit easily if you have questions
- Office hours that fit your schedule – convenience matters; otherwise you might not go
- Rapport between yourself and the veterinarian – you want to be able to communicate openly about concerns

Also identify the nearest animal hospital. You never know when there might be an emergency.

By building a relationship with a veterinarian, you will know that your Chihuahua is getting care from someone you trust. And by going to the same veterinarian over time, you will be building a medical history for your pet. Building this relationship will have a positive long-term impact on the quality of care your Chihuahua receives throughout life.



Your Chihuahua's First Visit To The Vet

When should you first take your new Chihuahua to the veterinarian? The short answer is, as soon as possible. And it must not end at one visit. Your puppy will need more veterinary care in the first year of life than at any other time. Not only are there concerns of immediate importance, there is a lot your veterinarian can do and recommend that will help keep your puppy healthy even when he is all grown up

First visit

Ideally, select a veterinarian even before bringing your Chihuahua puppy home. Once your puppy is home, the first meeting of veterinarian and puppy should happen as soon as possible - ideally within 24 hours. In addition to a general check up and examination for parasites, you and the veterinarian should work out a specific schedule of visits and vaccinations at that first meeting.

First three months

In the first three months of your puppy's life, your veterinarian will probably want to meet every three or four weeks for vaccinations. How long this schedule continues varies by location, but going until 16 weeks of age is not unusual.

Three to six months

Rabies vaccinations sometimes are regulated by local laws and often begin between three and six months. Between four and six months, your puppy should be checked again for parasites and your veterinarian may recommend heartworm treatment. Also watch for your puppy's permanent teeth to come in.

Spaying or neutering is recommended between four and six months. The procedure is simple, and males usually feel pretty good in a day. Females may take two or three days. This is an important decision. With the number of unplanned dogs born every year, having your puppy sterilized is the responsible thing to do.

Six months to a year

After six months, the veterinarian visits usually taper off. There are boosters at about one year, and these will be repeated on a regular basis, following your veterinarian's recommendation. In general, it is a good idea for adult Chihuahua's to make at least one visit a year to maintain the healthy start they got as puppies.

Perhaps the most loving, responsible thing you can do for your Chihuahua is to see that he receives timely health care from a qualified veterinarian. His life depends on it.



Vaccinating Your Chihuahua

Just like humans, puppies receive vaccines to protect them against disease according and viruses to the schedule provided by your veterinarian. Although only your veterinarian can tell you how many visits are needed and when, expect several in the first year of your dog's life and annual boosters after that.

If you have adopted an adult Chihuahua and don't know if its shots are current, see your veterinarian about the best course of action.

A vaccine works by introducing your Chihuahua's immune system to a small strain of a particular virus, without actually giving the animal the disease. This

allows your dog the chance to become familiar with the virus, allowing them the chance to fight it off. Therefore, the next time your Chihuahua is introduced to the same virus, his immune system will be able to quickly fight off the foreign bacteria with ease.

Your veterinarian may provide routine vaccinations for canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus, coronavirus, parainfluenza, Bordetella, Lyme disease and rabies. Remember, most vaccines must be given over a period of time and require multiple veterinary visits. So check with your veterinarian and get ready for a happy, rewarding friendship with your Chihuahua.

Canine Distemper

A highly contagious viral disease that affects a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems. It can be spread through the air or by contact with an infected animal, its feces or urine and can be fatal. Because a puppy's natural immunity may wear off before he is vaccinated, reduce risk of exposure by limiting contact with unfamiliar dogs until the vaccination series is completed.

Symptoms include coughing, sneezing, nose and eye discharge, fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea and seizures.

Infectious Canine Hepatitis

This viral disease, also known as adenovirus, is spread by contact with infected animals, their feces, urine or saliva. It affects the liver, kidneys and cells lining the blood vessels.

Symptoms include high fever, thirst, inflammation of nose or mouth, diarrhea, abdominal pain and tenderness, liver damage, loss of appetite, hemorrhage and depression.

Leptospirosis

An extremely contagious bacterial disease that spreads through contact with nasal secretions, urine or saliva of infected animals. Early signs are not apparent, so infection can go undetected. Recovered animals can continue spreading the disease, which can also affect humans.

Leptospirosis may produce inflamed kidneys, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and listlessness. Liver damage can also occur. Note that early signs of the disease may not be readily apparent.

Parvovirus

This viral infection is a common, deadly viral infection and usually strikes puppies. It is spread by contact with and infected dog's blood, feces or vomit

Symptoms include severe diarrhea, fever, vomiting, loss of appetite and

dehydration.

Parinfluenza

A highly infectious virus that can be one of the causes of "kennel cough." It spreads quickly among dogs kept in close quarters and can seriously damage the respiratory system or even result in death.

Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough, loss of appetite, depression and runny nose and eyes.

Rabies

This is an infection of the central nervous system that results in paralysis and death. Rabies is always fatal. It is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Rabies is a serious public health threat, so it is essential to vaccinate your dog. Most states have laws requiring vaccination.

A stage of high excitability includes unprovoked biting and sensitivity to noise. There is also a stage of paralysis, cramps and swallowing difficulties.

Coronavirus

A highly contagious viral infection of the gastrointestinal tract. Again, this disease is spread through contact with infected blood, feces or vomit.

Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, high fever and dehydration.

Bordetella

This is an airborne bacterial infection involved in "kennel cough." Dogs may catch this when exposed to other dogs in kennels, dog shows and field trials.

Symptoms include persistent coughing, sneezing and retching accompanied by nasal discharge. It also increases your dog's susceptibility to other upper respiratory infections.

Lyme Disease

This is a tick-borne disease that affects both dogs and humans.

It can exhibit itself as arthritis with the sudden onset of severe pain and lameness, fever, lethargy, loss of appetite and depression.

Newborn Chihuahua puppies receive disease-fighting antibodies from their mother's milk. These antibodies normally last only six to sixteen weeks, however. After that, your puppy needs vaccinations to help protect him from disease.

Some Chihuahua's may have a reaction to a vaccine, but these reactions are rarely dangerous. If your Chihuahua experiences loss of appetite or excessively sleeps for *more* than 48 hours after a vaccination, you should consult your vet.

If your Chihuahua has symptoms of swelling, vomiting or hives, their reaction is stronger, but none life-threatening. Simply have them examined by the vet, and inform the vet of possible allergic reactions before the next vaccination, so he or she can take precautions to lessen the stress on your dog.

Even if your Chihuahua has a reaction, you should still have him or her regularly vaccinated, as small reactions pale in comparison to contracting a fatal virus.

Chihuahua's should begin receiving vaccinations when they are puppies, and are over 3 months of age. Your vet will inform you of the vaccinations most needed for your dog, so don't be afraid to ask questions, and learn all about the various diseases that threaten the life of your furry loved one, so you can keep them well protected.



Pet Health Insurance

One of the best ways to protect yourself financially if your Chihuahua suffers from any future illnesses that require expensive treatments is to obtain pet health insurance.

If you are interested in obtaining pet health insurance for your Chihuahua, you will find that there are many excellent insurance companies such as Pet Assure, Veterinary Pet Insurance and Premier Pet Insurance that can provide coverage for your dog if he or she should ever become seriously ill.

Of course there are different pet health insurance plans for you to consider, so you can choose the one that you feel most comfortable with and can afford.

However, you should keep in mind, that just like most insurance policies, pet health insurance will not cover any pre-existing conditions in your Chihuahua. That being the case, if pet health insurance is something you want for you dog, you should sign up for it as soon as possible, so both you and your pal can truly benefit from it.



How to Keep Your Chihuahua Healthy

Your Chihuahua will rely on you to keep him in good health. A proper diet, regular exercise and grooming, and routine check-ups at the veterinarian will help keep your dog in top form.

It's also important for you to get to know your Chihuahua's habits - eating, drinking, sleeping, and so forth - since sometimes a variation in those habits can be an indication that he isn't feeling well.

A good pet care plan can help with the cost of providing quality healthcare throughout your dog's life. As vet bills for dog health care in later years can be very expensive.

If your Chihuahua does become ill then it is important to give him the best medication.

Skin

Healthy skin is flexible and smooth, without scabs, growths, white flakes, or red areas. It ranges in color from pale pink to brown or black depending on the breed. Spotted skin is normal, whether your dog has a spotted or solid coat.

Check your Chihuahua for fleas, ticks, lice, or other external parasites. To do this, blow gently on your dog's stomach or brush hair backward in a few places to see if any small specks scurry away or if ticks are clinging to the skin. Black "dirt" on your dog's skin or bedding may be a sign of flea droppings.

Coat

A healthy coat is glossy and pliable, without dandruff, bald spots, or excessive oiliness.

Eyes

Bright and shiny eyes are an excellent sign of good dog health. Mucus and watery tears are normal but should be minimal and clear. The pink lining of the eyelids should not be inflamed, swollen, or have a yellow discharge.

The whites of your Chihuahua's eyes should not be yellowish. Eyelashes should not rub the eyeball. Healthy Chihuahua's have large, luminous dark, ruby or light eyes depending on the color of the coat. They should not look dull.

Ears

The skin inside your dog's ears should be light pink and clean. There should be some yellow or brownish wax, but a large amount of wax or crust is abnormal. Poor dog health is shown by redness or swelling inside the ear. Your Chihuahua shouldn't scratch his ears or shake his head frequently.

Nose

Most people assume that a shiny wet nose is a sign. A dog's nose is usually cool and moist. It is also self-colored, black or pink. Nasal discharge should be clear, never yellowish, thick, bubbly, or foul smelling. A cool, wet nose does not necessarily mean good Chihuahua health, and a dry, warm nose doesn't necessarily mean he's sick.

Mouth, Teeth and Gums

Healthy gums are important for Chihuahua health. They should be firm and pink, black, or spotted, just like your dog's skin. Young dogs have smooth white teeth that tend to darken with age. Puppies have 23 baby teeth and adults have around 42 permanent teeth, depending on the breed. As adult teeth come in, they push baby teeth out of the mouth.

To check your Chihuahua's mouth, talk to him gently, then put your hand over the muzzle and lift up the sides of his mouth. Check that adult teeth are coming in as they should, and not being crowded by baby teeth. Make sure the gums are healthy and the breath is not foul-smelling. Look for soft white matter or hard white, yellow, or brown matter. This is plaque or tartar and should be brushed away to keep your dog in good health.

Mouth infections can lead to serious problems in the gums and lead to poor dog health in other parts of the body, including the heart, so it's important to give your dog's teeth and mouth special attention.

Temperature

A Chihuahua's normal temperature is 101 to 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 to 39.2 degrees Celsius). Taking a dog's temperature will tell you a lot about your dog's health.

To take your dog's temperature, you'll need a rectal thermometer. Put some petroleum jelly on the bulb of the thermometer. Ask someone to hold your dog's head while you lift his tail and insert the thermometer about an inch or so into the rectum. Do not let go of the thermometer. Hold it in until the temperature is read (about 3 minutes for a mercury thermometer), and then remove gently.

Heartbeat and Pulse

The heart beat of a Chihuahua in good health will be from 60 to 130 times a minute depending on whether they are resting or playing. Puppies have faster speeds, up to 220 beats per minute.

To check your Chihuahua's heartbeat, place your fingers over the left side of the chest, where you can feel the strongest beat.

To check the pulse - which is the same speed as the heartbeat - press gently on the inside of the top of the hind leg. There is an artery there and the skin is thin, so it's easy to feel the pulse.

Wee & Poo!

Urine is a great indicator of a good health, and should be clear yellow. Most adult Chihuahua's have one or two bowel movements a day. Stools should be brown and firm. You can also check for worms. Runny, watery, or bloody stools, straining, or too much or too little urination warrant a call to the vet.

Weight

A healthy Chihuahua's weight is the result of the balance between diet and exercise. If he is getting enough nutritious food and exercise but still seems over- or underweight, he may have a health problem.

Don't let your Chihuahua get fat by giving him too many between-meal snacks; obese dogs often develop serious health problems. The best way to tell if your dog is overweight is to feel his rib-cage area. You should be able to feel the ribs below the surface of the skin without much padding.

If you let your dog get over weight, or feed him the wrong things, then you can guarantee he will certainly suffer from poor dog health at some point in his life.



10 tips for a Healthy Chihuahua

1. Feed him a balanced diet.
2. Give an occasional yogurt treat
3. Ask your vet about giving your Chihuahua calcium tablets as they could have some problems later on in life!
4. Keep him comfortable so his immune system can remain strong.
5. Give your Chihuahua lots of exercise and regularly.
Remember that he is a small but active breed and requires physical outlets for his energy to remain a good weight.
6. Walk them two times a day or have play sessions. Provide plenty of space for them to bounce around. You want to keep their spirit up and not break it or they won't be your dogs you fall in love with in the first place. Healthy and happy Chihuahuas are a joy to live with.
7. Remember to clothe your Chihuahua when you take him outside in cold temperatures to keep him warm and dry.
8. Make a breeder your friend.
Keep in touch with the breeder who sold you the Chihuahua. The breeder can advise you about care and health matters that are unique to the breed. Any Chihuahua breeder, for that matter, can be an invaluable ally to you throughout your Chihuahua's life.
9. Guard your Chihuahua from fleas.
Your Chihuahua has fleas if you find black specks in the fur or fleabite marks on the skin. A tip given by an owner is to give your Chihuahua garlic daily to prevent fleas.

Chihuahuas catch fleas from other animals. It is an every day problem that, at some time or another, you can expect to encounter in your Chihuahua. The fleas only go to the Chihuahua to feed on its blood. Fleas mostly live and multiply in your home. The comfortable living - central heating, double-glazing and, best of all, the fitted carpet - we create for ourselves and our Chihuahua, also work best for the fleas.
10. De-worm your puppy every month, and your adult Chihuahua, every six months.



Your Chihuahua And The Weather

No matter where you live, the weather can pose a danger to your Chihuahua at one time or another. Know what the risks are and how to avert them.

Hot weather

Heat and humidity – and conditions that come with them – can pose a risk to dogs.

Make sure your Chihuahua has shade when outside.

Supply plenty of cool water in a clean bowl.

Make your Chihuahua rest between periods of exercise.

Avoid excessive exercise your Chihuahua during hot days or warm, humid nights. The best time to exercise dogs is either early in the morning before sunrise or late in the evening after the sun goes down.

Watch for muscle weakness, heavy panting, dry skin, rapid heartbeat and/or collapse. It can mean heatstroke. Get to shade, give small amounts of water, immerse your dog in cool water if possible and get to your veterinarian.

In some areas, summer means mosquitoes and the risk of heartworm. See your veterinarian for preventative treatment.

The problem of fleas and ticks intensifies during summer months.

Hot pavement, sticky tar or gravel may cause footpad problems. To remove tar from footpads, rub them with petroleum jelly and then gently wash with mild soap and water and rinse thoroughly.

Never leave your Chihuahua confined in a car or any other poorly ventilated enclosure; it can be fatal to your dog.

Cold weather

Remove salt, ice and packed snow from your Chihuahua's paws.

Make sure your Chihuahua isn't left "out in the cold." Provide warm shelter or let him inside on cold nights. Your pet's shelter should be insulated, elevated, protected from prevailing winds and watertight.

Feed your Chihuahua extra food if he spends time outside. It takes energy to keep warm.

If you have an indoor Chihuahua, winter may mean less exercise outside, which could mean weight gain. Watch your dog's body condition and adjust feeding amounts as needed.

If your Chihuahua is outside, let him run around. It keeps the blood flowing.

You may find your indoor Chihuahua experiencing dry skin and shedding. This is usually the result of low humidity. Frequent brushing helps remove dead hairs, skin and stimulates oil glands.

Dampness is a winter danger. Dry your pet if he gets wet and do all you can to keep him dry.

Keep fireplaces screened and train pets to keep a safe distance; cinders and fumes can cause problems

If your Chihuahua suffers from frostbite, do not rub the skin. Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws and ear tips so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Storms

Whether it's a winter or summer storm, your pet should not be left outside. Dangers include:

Flying debris that can strike and injure your pet

Excessive cold and wet that leave your dog miserable and weakened

Lightning can pose the same risks to dogs that it can to humans

Winter winds and snow can lead to frostbite, chapping and hypothermia

Chihuahua's have natural coats, but they aren't invincible. If you wouldn't want to stay out in the weather, your dog shouldn't either.



Chihuahua's And Holidays

Holidays are a lot of fun for people and they can be for Chihuahua's too. But they can also carry some risks. When you and yours get together, include your companion in the holidays in a way that is sensible, and provide supervision and forethought.

Food

Many gatherings involve wonderful meals. Your family and guests may be tempted to slip your dog a little food as a holiday treat. Avoid this and ask people not to give handouts. They could upset your Chihuahua's stomach; poultry may include bones; and if your dog becomes accustomed to treats, you may end up with a dog that begs at the table year-round.

Decorations

Some Chihuahua's are notorious for chewing. Yarn, tinsel, ribbons and other "chewables" are attractive to a playful dog and may cause internal damage if swallowed. If you cannot supervise your Chihuahua puppy or dog, keep him confined in a safe area.

Candy

Chihuahua's, like people, may be tempted by holiday goodies. Allowing them to have holiday treats and sweets can lead to digestive upsets. In the case of chocolate goodies, beware. Chocolate contains theobromine, which is toxic to dogs.

Excitement

Please remember that the holidays can be stressful for Chihuahua's. More people, more noise and changes in their daily schedule may frighten or confuse them. Securing your pet in a quiet area during a holiday party can be easier for your Chihuahua and for you.

Holidays like Halloween include the extra excitement of lots of visitors, strange sights and sounds, and candy everywhere. If your Chihuahua is timid by nature, new people are frightening enough without all those noisemakers and funny costumes. If your Chihuahua is protective of you, all those people ringing your doorbell is certain to stress him as he's trying so hard to protect you and can't understand why you keep telling him it's okay. If your Chihuahua is friendly or curious, he could easily make a quick exit through that constantly opening door. Keep your dog on a leash or in a crate if you have concerns.

New Chihuahua's as gifts

Although a new Chihuahua puppy or dog on a holiday would be a wonderful surprise, it can be stressful for the dog, causing him to become over-excited and confused. This confusion may create problems in getting your new Chihuahua off to a good start. You may not have adequate time to begin housetraining your dog immediately and help him adjust to his new surroundings. Both time and patience are needed to establish a routine for a new Chihuahua.

If possible, pick up your new Chihuahua no later than the weekend before the holiday. This will allow time to become accustomed to his new home and family before the hustle and bustle of the holiday. If this is not possible, or if the days prior to the holiday promise to be hectic, try to arrange to pick up your new Chihuahua after the holidays when household activities are calmer.



Chihuahua Travel

If you are planning to travel with your Chihuahua, you should start by asking yourself if it makes sense to bring your canine companion. Many dogs love to travel, and many more can tolerate it, but flying your Chihuahua across the country just to have him stay in his crate once you get there isn't fair to either of you.

Before you travel

If you decide it does make sense to bring your dog along, there are preliminary preparations to make.

- Contact your destination and make sure your dog is welcome where you are staying.
- Go to your veterinarian and make sure all your dog's vaccinations are up to date.
- Ask your veterinarian to make sure your dog is in good enough health to travel.
- See if there are any particular health concerns (i.e. insects, cold, heat) at your destination. Take necessary precautions.

Packing for your trip

- Take health and rabies certificates, which are needed when crossing some borders.
- Bring a recent color photo of your dog to help identify him if lost.
- Pack bowls, leash, toys, crate, medicines and grooming equipment.
- You may want to take food if traveling by car or if you aren't sure where to get food at your destination. Sudden diet changes can lead to digestive upsets and spoil the trip for you and your Chihuahua.
- Make sure your Chihuahua is wearing ID tags, and preferably carrying contact info for you at your destination.

Traveling by car

- It's best to have a crate or car carrier in the back. Don't put it in direct sunlight.
- If your Chihuahua is out of the crate, make sure he's buckled up. Special harnesses that connect to the seat belt are available. Don't use a leash – in a sudden stop, this could cause serious injury.
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- Don't put your Chihuahua in the back of a truck.
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- Do not feed your Chihuahua for at least three hours before leaving on a trip.
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- During stops, provide fresh drinking water for your Chihuahua. You may also reward him with a dog snack for being a good traveler.
-
- Feed your Chihuahua shortly after you arrive at your destination or when you have stopped for the day.
-
- Always put your Chihuahua on a leash before letting him out of the car.
-
- Never leave your Chihuahua in a closed car on a hot day. The heat and insufficient air circulation can quickly lead to heat stress and even death.

Traveling by air

- Try to avoid peak travel periods when delays and stopovers are longer, especially in very hot or very cold weather.
- Plan a trip with as few stops and transfers as possible.
- Make hotel, resort and airline reservations for your Chihuahua well in advance.
- Some airlines allow cats and small dogs to travel (generally for an additional charge) with their owner if the carrier fits under the passenger seat. If, for some reason, this is not possible for your Chihuahua, rent or purchase a carrier or crate which meets airline regulations and affix a LIVE ANIMAL sticker. Mark it with your name and address and the name of a person who can be contacted about your Chihuahua at your destination if necessary. Put your dog's name in a clear place so that everyone passing can use it and help him feel more at ease.
- Put a cushion or blanket on the crate floor. Attach a water bowl to the crate door. The bowl should be deep, but not too full of water to avoid spilling.

On the day of the flight, take your Chihuahua for a long walk before leaving for the airport.

At the end of the trip, pick up your Chihuahua promptly.

Be prepared for your Chihuahua to spend time in quarantine at foreign destinations. Ask your travel agent or the consul of the country you plan to visit about quarantines.

At your destination

At your vacation site, observe all regulations regarding dogs. Confine your Chihuahua in a carrier or restricted space when leaving it alone. Your consideration will help keep dogs welcome as guests.



Taking Care of Your Sick Chihuahua

Chihuahua illnesses can happen at any time. Believe it or not, some dogs are more susceptible to certain dog illnesses than others.

Symptoms of Dog Illnesses

Symptoms of dog diseases can vary from poor coat condition to bleeding. You may be able to treat minor complaints yourself but should your dog exhibit any of the symptoms then you must take him to a vet immediately.

- Bleeding from the nose, mouth, rectum, genitalia
- Not eating or eating much less than normal for more than 1 day
- Drinking excessively
- Lethargy.
- Pain when you touch or move the animal
- Inability to urinate or defecate or showing signs of stress when attempting these activities

A veterinarian should always be contacted whenever your dog is not acting normally or its health is in question.

When you go to visit your veterinarian, you might want to ask him or her about the common dog illnesses for your particular breed of dog. You need to be prepared for what's ahead and you want to provide your dog with as much immunity to these diseases as possible.

The best way to ensure you can provide for your dog when he is ill is to take out pet insurance. Vet bills can be very costly and no one wants to be in a position where they can't afford to look after dog when he really needs care.

Your vet will likely give your dog the necessary shots to keep it healthy for many of these potential illnesses, but you have a right and a need as a responsible pet owner to know what may lie ahead.

In addition, knowing what dog illnesses are common in particular breeds can help you and your vet determine what a particular illness might be. If you know what the symptoms are for the illnesses that are most common in your breed of dog, you can better diagnose your pet and catch the illness before it becomes severe. Knowing the common dog diseases will help you keep your dog healthy.

Here are some common Chihuahua illnesses. Some of these illnesses are found mainly when your dog reaches an older age; others of these illnesses can occur at any point throughout your Chihuahua's life.

Chihuahua's, unfortunately, are prone to several potential health problems like:

- skin allergy
- food allergy
- cancer
- Hypoglycemia
- Patellar Luxation
- Cystinuria
- cardiac problems
- fleas
- worms

Knowing what they are will help you to better monitor your pet's health and to gather the pertinent information, in case of an illness, that would assist your veterinarian to administer the correct diagnosis and treatment. Below are some common afflictions of the Chihuahua.



Common Chihuahua Illnesses

Many of the physical health problems that most Chihuahua are susceptible to, such as Patellar Luxation, and hypoglycemia could be the cause of over-breeding. However, many other illness that affect Chihuahua are common health issues that are a risk factor for almost every breed.

Dog Worms and How to Cure Them

Every single Chihuahua in the world is susceptible to dog worms (internal parasites). From the eerily fatal Heartworm, carried by mosquitoes, to the relatively benign Roundworm, all dogs should undergo regular fecal exams, and parasite prevention.

It is important to know about the possible dog worms that can affect your pet because you can catch them too. As you interact with your dog, you are susceptible, as are any children in your home.

Worms are another everyday problem in adult Chihuahua's, but it is the puppies that are more likely to get sick from worms. The infected dog will lose weight and become weak, suffer from upset stomach, poor growth, listlessness or even lung trouble. Worms may impede your puppy's growth and cause him to have a potbelly, or be thin and have a shoddy-looking coat.

Your grown Chihuahua may not be showing any sign of worms, but he could spread them more than the sick puppy, through large amount of larvae or eggs passed out in the feces. Released into the surrounding, these larvae and eggs could infect other animals and even children.

In more serious cases, your dog will catch cough, pneumonia and develop lung problems.

The Most Common Dog Worms

There are different types of worms that infect dogs such as tapeworm, roundworm, ringworm and heartworm.

Roundworm

The most common internal parasite, roundworms are especially prevalent in puppies. Puppies are often infested in utero, from a roundworm infested mother.

The roundworms (toxocara) live and produce hundreds of eggs in the intestine.

They cause digestive upset in puppies, poor growth, and thin or out-of-

conditioned coat.

The infected puppies may become listless, have a potbelly or tucked in appearance.

Once the roundworms migrated from the gut to the lungs, your Chihuahua can suffer lung damage, cough and pneumonia.

The roundworm eggs in your dog droppings get passed out and about.

These are very hardy eggs, resistant to heat and cold, and can survive up to 7 years in the soil. The eggs can pass on to children through ingestion and cause them to fall sick as well.

As precautions, you can toilet train your Chihuahua puppy to use a place where you can easily clean up and dispose of the droppings into the sewer. Have your children wash their hands every time after they handle the puppies, and discourage your puppies from licking people's hands or faces.

Heartworm

Heartworms, left untreated, will be fatal. These deadly dog worms are spread by mosquitoes, and take up residence inside the muscles of the heart. Prevention is very much recommended.

Whipworm

Whipworms are long, whip-shaped dog worms that take up residence in your dog's colon. Eggs are shed and diagnosis can be made three months later through a veterinarian fecal exam. Weight loss, anemia, and fresh blood in the stool are signs of a heavy infestation.

Hookworm

Hookworms are minuscule (12 to 15 mm) intestinal worms that hook onto the intestinal wall and consume copious amounts of blood. A hookworm infestation can kill a puppy before the eggs are ever discovered in a fecal exam. It is extremely important to test all dogs on a regular basis, as hookworms are not only very contagious to other pets, but also to humans.

Tapeworm

The most common dog tapeworm is transmitted through fleas. The most common sign of infestation is discovering the egg sacks around the anus. Egg sacks look grains of rice that may or may not be moving. Treatment is accomplished by a prescription from your veterinarian. Due to the nature of tapeworms, regular de-worming medication will not help.

As part of the tapeworm's life cycle occurs in the flea that acts as the host, if your Chihuahua has tapeworms it has fleas also, and the treatments for both are

usually prescribed together by the vet.

The tapeworms have a flat, segmented body. You see them as single segments or chains that resemble segments of rice in the droppings of infected canine.

Common Signs of Dog Worms

Some of the common signs of worm infections are listed below, but these may also be symptoms of other illnesses. When ever your pet is acting ill, we always recommend an examination of your pet and an analysis of a fecal sample.

- A change in your dog's appetite
- A distended abdomen in puppies
- Coughing or hiccupping resulting from the coughing up of worm larvae emerging from the lungs
- Weight loss
- Weakness
- A dull coat
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Observing the worms-either round worm, which looks like spaghetti, or tapeworm segments that look like grains of rice in the stool or on the fur
- Exercise intolerance, due to heartworm

Steps to Prevent Dog Worms

Regular veterinary check-ups and fecal exams are an important part of responsible dog ownership, and the only way to ensure your best friend stays parasite free (and you too!).

De-worm your Chihuahua puppy every month and your grown Chihuahua, every 6 months.

Have your veterinarian screen your dog for worms twice a year - and more often if your dog is at high risk of a worm infection.

Examples of high risk Chihuahua are those animals living in crowded urban areas, show pets, hunting dogs, and multiple pet households. Worm your dogs regularly.

Control fleas, which can carry certain tapeworms. These tapeworms can be transmitted to dogs or people who accidentally swallow an infected flea.

Prevent your dog from eating animal carcasses, such as rabbits and rodents, which may contain immature tape worms that will mature in your dog

Maintain good hygiene. For instance, whipworm and roundworm eggs dropped to

the soil in your dog's feces can remain infectious for years, while hook worm larvae can accumulate in the earth of a dog run. All can re-infect your Chihuahua. Rapid removal of feces is important. Pave over your dog run. This is much safer than having a soil or gravel surface in which worms can survive.



Flea Infected Chihuahua

Flea-infected Chihuahua can develop skin diseases, especially those allergic to fleas.

Black specs in the fur and bite marks on the skin will tell you if your Chihuahua has them. To check further, spread some newspapers and place your Chihuahua on top. Brush him and look for the black specs falling off.

Fleas live up to 6 weeks, feeding on blood and during that time would have laid hundreds of eggs that mostly land on your Chihuahua's bedding, carpets and other favorable nests around your home.

The eggs hatch into larvae that seek nice, dark places while feeding on flea's droppings, dust, human shed skin, dandruff and other such tasty morsels.

The larvae turn into hardy pupae that could survive for months before changing into adult fleas.

Fleas are host to tapeworms. Both problems are likely to occur together in your Chihuahua and, therefore, the treatments are also usually given together by the vet.

A bit of garlic a day may keep the fleas away from your Chihuahua.

Dog Flea Control: Finding and curing fleas

Effective dog flea control requires the three P's! Pets, Premise and Persistence

1. Pets - control of fleas on your dog
2. Premise - control of dog fleas in your environment
3. Persistence - controlling dog fleas is an ongoing battle.

Environmental dog flea control is probably the more important of the two. Adult dog fleas on your canine account for as little as 5% of the total flea population. Dog fleas can be shared by cats and dogs, so if you have a cat, it must also be

treated.

Dog fleas feeding on your dog can cause several problems:

Itching and scratching at the flea bite-in most dogs, the itching is mild and temporary

Some Chihuahua's become allergic to flea saliva and develop severe itching, hair loss, and skin damage from scratching and biting at the site. If left untreated a skin infection can develop

- Tapeworm infestation-dog fleas are an essential part of the tapeworm's life cycle, your dog is infested with tapeworms when it swallows a flea that contains immature tapeworm stages
- Anemia-loss of red blood cells. This occurs only with severe flea infestations, and usually occurs only in young or sick animals

Finding Dog Fleas

It is easy to tell when your Chihuahua is heavily infested with dog fleas. You can see the fleas crawling over your dog's skin and through the hair.

However, if your dog has only a light infestation, you may not see any fleas unless you look for them. A common place to see fleas is on your dog's belly and the inside of the thighs, where the hair is thin or the skin is bare. Another place to look for dog fleas is in the dense hair over your dog's rump, especially near the base of the tail. Part the hair and inspect the skin for either fleas or flea dirt.

Flea dirt is actually flea droppings. It looks like black grains of sand or cracked pepper on your dog's skin. If you place a few particles of flea dirt on a white surface (e.g. a piece of paper) and wet them, you will see a reddish brown stain form. This is because droppings from dog fleas contain digested blood from the flea's blood meal. You may also notice tiny areas of dried blood on your dog's bedding from moistened flea dirt that has since dried.

Dog Flea Control

There are many excellent products that if used appropriately are excellent for dog flea control on your pet.

There are numerous products that will kill adult dog fleas on your dog. However, they vary in the duration of their effects:

Flea shampoos, sprays, and powders

Most will kill any dog fleas at the time of application, but they have no lasting effect.

Your dog may have more fleas within 24 hours of being treated

Some of the newer sprays can be safely used every day, if necessary

Flea rinses (dips)

These may provide effective dog flea control for 4-5 days, depending on the product purchased. The rinse is applied after your dog has been shampooed; it is left to dry on your dog's coat

Sprays containing flea growth regulators

Depending on the product, these sprays are usually applied weekly. The growth regulators help break the flea's life cycle, this makes for more effective dog flea control.

Flea collars

Can be give effective dog flea control for a couple of weeks. Flea collars are not very effective in warm, humid climates (environments that are ideal for immature flea development)

Some dogs are sensitive to flea collars and develop skin irritation under the collar. If this happens, you should remove the collar and use another method of flea control

Spot on products

Advantage® and Frontline® are two brand name products that are applied to a small area of your dog's skin; they effectively kill fleas for at least a month.

They kill the adult dog fleas, usually before the flea has had a chance to bite your dog. Be sure to select the appropriate package for your dog's body weight

Program®

This is a tablet that sterilizes any eggs laid by the fleas that feed on your dog. You must give your dog the tablet once a month for effective dog flea control. This drug does not kill the adult dog fleas on your pet, but it does break the flea life cycle by preventing hatching of the next generation of flea eggs Consult your veterinarian for a recommendation on what would work best for your pet.

Manage Your Environment

Dog flea control in your pet's environment is fairly simple for indoor dogs, especially if you have no other pets that regularly go outside. It is impossible to rid the outside environment of all fleas. Dog flea control in pets that regularly go

outside or live outside can be more difficult.

Unless you have strictly indoor pets, environmental dog flea control must target both your house and your yard:

House

Use a fogger or long-lasting spray to kill any adult and larval fleas

If you have a particularly bad problem with dog fleas, it is often worth having a professional exterminator treat your home

Dog fleas in the pupal (cocoon) stage are resistant to insecticides, including foggers, so it may be necessary for you to treat your home 2 or 3 times to get rid of all fleas

The second treatment should be done 2 weeks after the first

You should also wash or otherwise treat your dog's bedding on a regular basis

Yard / Garden

Spray your yard with an insecticide that has residual activity for at least 30 days

For a difficult flea problem, consider having an exterminator treat your yard

In warm, humid climates, it may be necessary to spray your yard every 30 days during the warmer months of the year

Some newer products contain a growth regulator (fenoxycarb) and need to be applied only once or twice a year

With the new residual treatments for your Chihuahua, environmental control is less important. In some cases, using these products on your dog effectively controls the flea population in the environment. Consult your veterinarian for more information on controlling fleas in your pet's environment.



Chihuahua Allergies

Chihuahua's, like humans, can also suffer from allergies. Most common Chihuahua allergies are itching of the skin. The respiratory tract can be affected causing coughing, sneezing, and/or wheezing. At times, the eyes and nose may develop a discharge. Also, the digestive system may be affected causing vomiting or diarrhea.

The most common dog allergies usually fall into one of the following; skin allergies, flea allergies, food allergies, inhalant allergies, contact allergies, or bacterial allergies.

Skin allergies

An allergic skin disease of dogs, known as canine atopic dermatitis, is caused by your dog's immune system hypersensitivity to common substances in the environment, such as dust mites or molds.

The signs of atopic dermatitis usually appear within the first two years of a dog's life.

If your dog begins to groom excessively, with licking or chewing of the paws, abdomen, and hind quarters, then it may suffer from atopic dermatitis. Also, check to see if the ears are reddened and hot to the touch.

Signs of dog allergies of this type are in the armpits, groin, or between the toes of the paws. Check to see if there is saliva staining. In light colored dogs, it appears as a red-brown staining. In chronic cases the skin, mostly in the abdomen, may change color from a pinkish, to angry red, to black mottling.

Other dog allergies like flea allergy, food allergy, and parasitic infestations may mimic the symptoms of atopic dermatitis making it difficult to diagnose. Once fleas, foods, and parasitic infestations are eliminated as being the offending culprits, then allergy skin testing for dust mites, pollens, and molds may be done to determine what causes your dog's atopic dermatitis.

Flea allergies

The most common form of dog allergies is flea allergy dermatitis. The flea itself is not the culprit in canine flea allergies. It is their saliva that causes the allergic reaction.

A skin allergy test can be preformed to determine if a dog is allergic to flea saliva. If it is, then a strict flea control regimen is required to reduce symptoms to dog allergies of this kind. Caution must be used however to make sure the chemicals in the flea preparations are not harmful to your dog.

Inhalant allergies

Just like humans, canine inhalant dog allergies can be caused by pollens (tree, grass, and weed), dust mites, molds, and chemicals.

Although any pure bred or mutt can acquire inhalant allergies, the most common breeds that are affected by these dog allergies include Terriers, Poodles, Cocker Spaniels, German Shepherds, Irish Setters, Dalmatians, Miniature Schnauzers, and Pugs.

The symptoms of an inhalant allergy include scratching, biting, chewing at feet and constant licking. The itching may be most severe on feet, flanks, groin, and armpits.

Inhalant allergies are often the reason for recurrent ear infections in your dog.

Food allergies

Chihuahua can become allergic to a food they have eaten for years, which causes many people to over look the possibility of a food allergy.

Food allergies only account for 10 percent of dog allergies. Common food allergies to food include; chicken, beef, pork, milk, fish, eggs, corn, wheat, soy, artificial sugars and chemical preservatives.

Determining which food allergen can be time consuming. First, eliminate all the possible allergens from the diet, by using a home made diet consisting of a protein and a starch your dog has not eaten before. Gradually add back, one at a time for a week, the ingredients of your dog food. If symptoms return, then the offending food allergen should be easily determined. Commercial dog foods can be found that do not contain the offending allergen.

Food sensitivities in a Chihuahua may manifest as itchy skin, scratching at ears, shaking of the head, licking and biting at the hind quarters or feet, rubbing faces on carpeting, ear inflammations, coughing, and rarely vomiting, diarrhea, flatulence, sneezing, asthma like symptoms, behavioral changes, seizures, gagging, and vomiting.

Contact allergies

Contact allergy is the least common of all the types of dog allergies. Some of the common contact allergens include flea collars, wood bedding, grass, plants, and sometimes chemicals.

Bacterial allergies

Several species of Staphylococcus (Staph) bacteria live on normal dog skin. Normally Staph does not cause a problem with its host, but some Chihuahua develop an allergy to it.

With this type of allergy your dog develops areas of hair loss that look much like ring worm. These areas become infected and need to be treated with antibiotics. The Staph allergic dog usually has recurrent Staph infections.



Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia is a blood disorder that is the result of low glucose levels in the blood, and is often present in those dog breeds that are smaller than 3lbs. And is why Chihuahua's are more likely to experience the disease than any other type of dog.

A hypoglycemic dog needs more sugar than the average dog, due to the fact that their body does not produce the proper amounts that are required in order for them to function properly and remain healthy.

In most cases, hypoglycemia occurs during puppyhood, and there are tell tale signs that indicate your little Chi may be suffering from this illness. Be on the look out for:

- Little energy
- Tilting of the head
- Hunger
- Restlessness
- Walking unbalanced / wobbly
- Convulsions or seizures
- Weakness
- Disorientation
- Coma
- Dazed

Other symptoms include, but are not limited to, vomiting, lethargy, coughing, excessive drooling, sweating occurring from nose and paws, glassy eyes as if your Chihuahua is in a daydreaming state, and acting particularly unusual, such as getting stuck in a place that they usually can get out of with no problem.

If you find your Chihuahua experiencing any of these symptoms, take him to the vet and have him checked right away. Even if you are sure that it's nothing, have him checked anyway.

If you discover that your Chihuahua has hypoglycemia, you will need to keep a sugar supply handy to help your Chihuahua should he or she need a boost of sugar. The sugar or insulin your dog will require depends on the severity of hypoglycemia. There are mild, moderate and severe cases of this disorder, and each one requires certain treatments to be effective.

For instance, if your dog has a mild case of hypoglycemia, then he or she will probably receive the glucose boost they need by simply eating some of their food, while a dog with a more severe case will need foods like corn syrup to help them relieve their symptoms.

Speak to your vet about the best ways to treat your Chihuahua, and learn everything you can to ensure that you are providing your dog with the best quality of life.



Deafness

The is among the more than 35 breeds of dogs on record to have hereditary sensorineural deafness; most common in breeds referred to as “white coated”, such as Chihuahua, Bull Terriers, and Dalmatians.

The condition cannot be reversed with medications, surgery or hearing aids. Dogs also could become deaf from old age, toxicosis or infection.

How do you tell if your Chihuahua is deaf?

He doesn't respond to spoken commands and only responds to you when he sees you.

He keeps shaking his head and pawing his ears or turns in the wrong direction when you call him.

He sleeps more than normal and would not wake up till you physically touch him.

But not to worry, you can still have a wonderful companion in your deaf Chihuahua through sign language.

Dogs have been known to learn as many as 65 command words in sign language. These include signs for, among others, “stop”, “potty”, “drop it”, “stay”, “lay down”, “sit”, “come” and “cookie”.

As extra measures, you want to keep the deaf Chihuahua in a safe environment as he cannot hear approaching dangers like an approaching car. So keep him on a leash and close to you when in traffic or out for walks.

On his nametag, add the word “deaf” so he will not be misunderstood if he ever gets lost. Some suggest putting a bell as well so you know where to find him if he gets lost.

And finally, if your Chihuahua tested positive for inherited deafness in one or both ears, do not breed him or her.



Epilepsy/ Seizure Disorder

When your Chihuahua is between 2 to 5 years old, he may develop a seizure disorder.

With all dog seizures you need to seek immediate veterinary care

Dog seizures are due to abnormal electrical conduction within the brain, that results in a loss of consciousness (in most cases), and various physical signs that can be associated with the seizure.

Most dog seizures usually last between 30 seconds to 2 to 3 minutes. It may only take place for 30 seconds but may seem forever to you. You need a veterinarian if it lasts more than 5 minutes.

Emergency treatment is definitely called for if your Chihuahua goes into seizure for 10 minutes or longer, twice in the span of 24 hours, or if he has a second attack before he could completely recover from the first seizure attack.

Physical signs of dog seizures

- Falling over to one side
- Legs "paddling" or generalized trembling/twitching
- Jaw "chomping"
- Salivation
- Urination
- Defecation
- Eyes "rolled back"
- Vocalizing

Most dogs will seem anxious, or seek out their owners prior to the actual seizure, when the above signs can be seen. Don't panic in such instances, and instead time the attack by actually looking at a watch or clock. Remain by your Chihuahua's side; be there when he comes out of the seizure to calm him. Stroke and comfort him.

Most likely your dog will then seem disoriented, and "drunk" in appearance, sometimes behaving blind, stumbling about, poorly responsive to his/her environment. This last phase of disorientation with dog seizures can last from as little as 10 minutes to several hours.

To keep your Chihuahua from hurting himself during the seizure, place thick cushions, blanket, etc. between your dog's head and any hard furniture and protect him from the stairs any sharp objects, water etc. Unlike seizure attacks in

humans, animals do not swallow their tongue. So you don't have to put your hand or spoon or any other object into your Chihuahua's mouth when he has an attack. Be very careful to avoid handling your dog's head directly, since this has often resulted in a biting injury to owner's hands.

When in a seizure your dog will be unaware of his/her surroundings, and may bite down very hard on your hand and not even realize it.

Also, keep children and other pets away from your sick Chihuahua.

Coming out of the seizure, your Chihuahua will be groggy, confused and feel like he has done something wrong. He may make unusual sounds and stumble around.

Do not allow him on the stairs until he has fully recovered. In the mean time, sooth him by talking to him softly, offer him some water, stroke and comfort him.

If dog seizures last for longer than 5 minutes they may be turning into "status epilepticus" which essentially means a constant state of seizure activity, and if the seizures are not stopped, this can lead to life threatening consequences.

This also can cause some temporary or permanent damage of the brain tissue. If a seizure climbs towards 5 minutes, get your dog to a vet immediately.

And if he doesn't recover fully after 30 minutes, consult your veterinarian or any emergency vet facility.

If your pet has more than one seizure in a 24- hour period, this is considered a "cluster" of dog seizures. You need to seek veterinary care once he or she has the second seizure, since this indicates a rapid succession of dog seizures and may require anticonvulsants be started to control these. A "cluster" will often precede "status epilepticus", as indicated above.

Make a record

Make sure to pay close attention to what you are witnessing. Record in notebook the following: Time the length of the seizure, and record Time the length of the "disoriented" phase that follows the seizure, and record -document exactly what signs were seen (from above list) was it associated with any events e.g.: exercise, eating, drinking, etc ... date and time of seizure.

The information that would be important to your veterinarian regarding such episodes includes:

1. Duration of the attack
2. The type of muscular activity your Chihuahua exhibits during seizure

3. Any abnormal behavior during the attack
4. Frequency of the seizure

By keeping a journal, it helps you to know how often your Chihuahua is suffering from dog seizures, and are these getting longer, or more violent? This information is important for you vet to help him treat the seizure(s).

The first time your Chihuahua has a seizure, your vet may take blood and x-rays to be assessed for any systemic problem that may cause the seizure, as well as, examine your pet for any abnormal neurological or cardiac signs.

Patterns of dog seizures

Some Chihuahua's have been known to have one seizure in their lives, while others develop serious repeated dog seizures. Your pet may never seizure again, or may continue to have dog seizures. You play an important role in the diagnosis and proper treatment of your pet's seizures, by providing an accurate history, and seeking veterinary help when indicated.



Cystinuria

This is a genetic disorder that occurs in many small dog breeds. This disease causes cystine crystals (crystals which are formed from amino acids better known as cystine) to occur in the urine, and will eventually lead to the forming of stones in the bladder and kidney, which can cause infection and irritation for your dog, should the stone become trapped in the urethra and block urine from flowing out.

You will know if your Chihuahua is suffering from this illness, as he will have difficulty urinating, have little urine or there will be blood present in it. He will also show signs of pain during eliminating. This illness can cause kidney failure to occur and your dog will show signs of vomiting, loss of appetite and depression.

If your dog is experiencing this, take him to the vet right away and have him treated, as this condition is life threatening. Unfortunately this is a chronic disorder, so your dog will be susceptible to these crystals for the rest of his life, but there are specific diets that you can put him on to keep his production of crystals at a minimum.



Patellar Luxation (Slipped Stifles)

The patella, otherwise known as the kneecap, is a tiny bone that is hidden within the tendon of the quadriceps muscles of the thigh. This tough inelastic tendon uses the patella to connect with the muscle, which can make the kneecap extremely vulnerable to slipping in and out of place.

This condition of patellar luxation, or slipped stifles as it is sometimes called, is a joint weakness, and can be mild or severe, and you will notice if your dog has it because he or she will show signs of lameness. Have them checked out by the Vet right away, and learn about possible treatments and how to care for this disorder.



Reversed Coughing

This is not an illness or disease, and is something that almost every Chihuahua will experience throughout his or her life. This cough sounds reversed, almost as if the little Chi is chocking by making a honking sign.

Although, it sounds alarming to the ears, in the vast majority of cases, this is common and will not harm your dog. Reversed coughing is caused by the palate in the throat becoming un-aligned. Stay with your Chihuahua when he or she is experiencing this, remain calm, talk them through it and try gently stroking their throat to help the palate to regain its normal positioning.

The first time your Chihuahua has a reversed cough, it is best to still have him checked by the vet to ensure that this is what they are experiencing and it is not the cause of something else.



Cancerous and Benign Tumors

Chihuahua are prone to cancer.

Therefore, any time you see a bump on your Chihuahua, you should have it checked out. About 20 out of 100 cases are cancerous.

Watch out for both external and internal lumps, eye ulcers and cherry eye as it is often called, as well as dermodicosis or skin sores.

Most cell tumors are malignant and they do not occur very often but can form either in the skin or within the body.

The related disorders reported along such tumors are round raised masses in the skin of your Chihuahua, lack of appetite, vomiting and abdominal pain. Check for tarry stools due to bleeding in the upper intestinal tract.

Chihuahua of any age can develop mast cell tumors, but older Chihuahua, 8 years or older, are more prone to it.

Never take tumors in your Chihuahua lightly, even a small one! The veterinarian will usually want any tumor removed immediately due to their high susceptibility to cancer.

If you notice a lump or bump on your Chihuahua that doesn't go away after a few days, regardless of its size - have it checked by your Vet.



Cryptorchidism

Cryptorchidism is peculiar to male dogs and a condition present at birth.

This condition occurs when the testicle(s), which developed in the abdomen, fail to descend into the scrotum. The usually underdeveloped and non-functional testicle(s) should be removed, as it could turn cancerous later in life.

If the condition remains after the puppy is more than 2 months old, then the chances are it is permanent.



Cataracts

Cataracts usually occur in older dogs, but can also appear in younger dogs that are prone to cataracts due to their hereditary, such as Chihuahua's.

Your vet can diagnose what is known as "juvenile cataracts" in your young dog, and if your canine is in good health, the cataracts can usually be successfully removed surgically.

Cataracts will appear to look like a hazy blue film on your dog's eye, and if left untreated will cause blindness.



Open Fontanel (Molera)

The frontal fontanel or molera is a part of the skull which remains unclosed. Although this causes no direct harm to the Chihuahua, it does leave them vulnerable to outside dangers. For instance, should a Chihuahua ever be struck in the skull, they can become seriously injured - or worse - die from the trauma due to having an unclosed skull.

This is a condition present in all young Chihuahua's, and usually stays with them throughout their adulthood, with the exception of larger Chihuahua's, in which the skull usually closes.



Heart Ailments

Bradycardia or slow heart rate may be a symptom of thyroid disorder in Chihuahua.

Dilated cardiomyopathy constitutes a serious, emergency case.

Your dog may collapse from this condition, or his back legs may have sudden pain and paralysis.

It is a serious heart condition whereby the heart muscle is enlarged and thin walled. Your Chihuahua will experience shortness of breath, coughing and won't be able to handle exercise.

The common heart conditions that you should be aware Chihuahua are prone to includes:

Mitral Valve Disease is any degenerative heart disease that causes progressive deformity and thickening of one (or more) heart valves. It is usually associated with a heart murmur.



Hypothyroidism

This disease concerns the thyroid gland that does not produce enough thyroid hormone, which can cause illness in the Chihuahua, and is a genetic disorder.

You will find that your Chihuahua will become lethargic, sleep a lot more, not be interested to play, tires easily and experiences depression or mental dullness.

He may gain weight, and become obese without having to eat more than usual.

There are so many symptoms that vary and are non-specific, all of which develop slowly. The reason for this is because not enough thyroid hormone produced affects the metabolic function of many organ systems.

Other signs of thyroid disorder include slow heart rate (bradycardia), infertility, constipation, diarrhea, as well as your Chihuahua not being able to stand the cold, and always seeking a warm place to lie down.

Hypothyroidism may also results in chronic skin disorders like dry skin and excessive hair loss, as well as other neurological and hormonal abnormalities.

A single symptom may not point to thyroid deficiency, but a combination of them should make your veterinarian more suspicious of it.



Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Chihuahua's having IBS will not gain weight, seem lethargic and have pale color mucus membrane in the mouth (oral mucosa) and eyes (eye scleras).

Monitor their stool for frank or occult blood, and start with a blood test to check for hematocrit (abdominal bleeding), which could save their life. This condition can be caused by food allergy.

In one case, the male Chihuahua diagnosed with IBS of the small intestine was failing to thrive and began to have syncopal episodes (fainting spells).

The owner put him on a strictly venison diet and he finally thrived, gained weight and is very active. The owner said many butcher shops sell venison and it is very reasonably priced.



Kidney Problems

Preventing kidney damage is key to your Chihuahua's survival.

If you suspect your Chihuahua may have kidney trouble, take him to the veterinarian for aggressive treatment.

Remember the concern over too much grapes or raisins is toxic for dogs and could ruin their kidneys?

Aggressive treatment in such poisoning cases means, if your Chihuahua had just overindulged in the grapes/raisins, the doctor will induce vomiting immediately and prescribe some activated charcoal pills.

There will be repeated blood tests to determine the status of kidney function plus hospitalization and intravenous fluid therapy if necessary.

The induced vomiting is to remove as much grapes or raisins as possible while the activated charcoal is to help prevent absorption of the toxic substance.

Two days of intravenous fluid therapy is often recommended to help prevent damage to the kidneys.

Blood test is usually repeated after 48 hours and 5 to 7 days to ensure the kidneys are functioning within the normal range.

Where kidney damage has occurred, the intravenous fluid therapy shall continue until blood tests indicate the kidneys have returned to normal function again.



Progressive Retinal Atrophy

This disorder causes the retina to slowly deteriorate, and is a condition that is usually hereditary.

Infected dogs with PRA will become "nightblind", and will not be able to see in dim light. As the disease progresses, the dog will eventually become completely blind.

If you suspect your Chihuahua might have PRA, your dog can undergo a retinoscopic exam, which is the only test that can diagnose this condition.

Once diagnosed, your vet may be able to provide you with possible treatment options.



Dog Arthritis

Dog arthritis is a common, painful condition that affects one out of five adult dogs; more than eight million in all. Although there are no miracle cures, much can be done to make old dogs with arthritis more comfortable and improve their lives.

Many Chihuahua's develop canine arthritis as they age. Although there are no miracle cures, much can be done to make old dogs with arthritis more comfortable and improve their lives.

Dog arthritis occurs when joint cartilage begins to split and fragment. The first signs might include stiffness, lagging behind on walks, or perhaps difficulty jumping up. Often, these signs are mistaken as part of the natural aging process however; the real cause is usually arthritis.

Unfortunately, because our Chihuahua's can't tell us if and where they hurt, it can be difficult to know that our pet is in pain and not just "getting older". Dog arthritis is one such ailment that can cause pain resulting in changes in behavior. The key is to recognize changes in your pet's behavior and realize that medical intervention may often make a huge difference to bring your pet back to his old self.

Some Signs of Dog Arthritis Include

- Decreased activity
- Reluctance to walk, run, climb stairs, jump or play
- Stiffness
- Limping
- Difficulty rising from a resting position
- Soreness when touched
- Yelping or whimpering in pain
- Acting aggressive or withdrawn
- Exhibiting other personality changes

If you notice any of these changes, see your veterinarian. The sooner the condition is recognized, the sooner your pet can be helped.

If you suspect your Chihuahua may be beginning to suffer with arthritis make visit your veterinarian to identify what's causing your pet's discomfort. If arthritis is the problem, your veterinarian can recommend the best treatment option for your

dog's condition, such as:

Long-term Pain Canine Arthritis Pain Relief

There are dozens of products for animals intended to relieve Dog arthritis by promoting joint and cartilage health. Their use has become nearly universal among veterinarians, no safety problems have arisen, and they are generally quite effective. Many vets say that every dog showing even the earliest signs of Dog arthritis should be receiving one of these products. They work best in the early stages of arthritis, while there is still reasonable joint function left to preserve.

Medications can soothe your arthritic pet a resort quality of life to your dog.

A non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication that's approved for long-term use, such as Rimadyl, may be prescribed to relieve your dog's pain and inflammation, thereby improving quality of life.

Rimadyl is a new non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug given in tablet form and labeled specifically for dogs, and is effective in relieving pain and inflammation safely, even for dog arthritis long-term use.

Weight-loss/exercise program

Taking off excess weight will help decrease stress on affected joints, while moderate exercise can help prevent decreased joint function.

Diet change

Your veterinarian may recommend a diet specially designed to meet your pet's needs, such as Eukanuba Senior Plus, or Hill's G/D

Soft comfortable place to sleep

Your dog's bed should be as comfortable as your own. An old mattress or soft couch is excellent. Soft foam rubber at least four inches thick is good. Scout around for an old baby mattress

Gentle, regular exercise

Provide limited, gentle exercise. Once around the block two or three times a day is about right. Avoid strenuous activity on the weekends alternating with little or none during the week



Medical Terms for Chihuahua's Health You Should Know

Health Terms

Aortic stenosis
Bacterial systitis
Bradycardia
Cardiac conduction

Cataract

Cryptorchidism
Cystinuria

Demodicosis
Eye scleras
Hematocrit
Hypothyroidism
Hypoglycemia
IBS

Incontinence
Mast cell tumor
Mitral Valve Disease
Molera
Open Fontanel
Patellar Luxation
Polydipsia
Polyphagia
Polyuria
PRA
Reversed Coughing
Slipped Stifles
Syncopam episode

Descriptions

Heart ailment
Bladder stones
Slow heart rate
Heart ailment pertaining to irregular heart beat
Film that grows on eye leading to blindness
Undescended testicle
Crystals that can cause stones to form in the bladder or kidney
Non-contagious mange
Mucus membrane in the eyes
Abdominal bleeding
Disorder of the thyroid gland
Low blood sugar
Irritable bowel syndrome
Poor control of urination
Malignant tumor
Degenerative heart disease
Open Fontanel
Unclosed skull
Joint weakness in the knee
Increased water consumption
Increased appetite
Increase urination
Progressive Retinal Atrophy
Honking cough due to un-aligned pallate
Patellar Luxation
Fainting spell



Chihuahua As Show Dogs

Aside from their outstanding strong characteristics, Chihuahua's are prized show dogs. The reason is due to the fact that the Chihuahua has impeccable balance, and is extremely disciplined when trained properly.

On top of that, the Chihuahua is a very intelligent dog, and has a bold and confident temperament, which also makes it the ideal show dog.

Of course, there is more to becoming a show dog than simply becoming a registered member at an association, or training and grooming a Chihuahua. All show dogs, depending on their breed, have to meet certain qualifications designated to their individual Standard In order for them to even be considered. The American Kennel Club and UK Kennel Club outline the desired qualifications for each dog breed, but to give you an example, a Chihuahua can be disqualified if:

- He is over 6 pounds
- His ears are cropped or are broken down
- He has a bobbed-tail or it has been cropped
- If, having a long-coat it is shabby and thin resembling a look of bareness, or is tight and curly

For the most part, Chihuahua show dogs in the UK and the US follow the same basic qualification rules.

Keep in mind, if you are interested in showing your Chihuahua, you should take the time to seek out the advice of professional champion breeders.



How To Breed Chihuahuas

When you adopt your Chihuahua puppy, you will need to decide whether or not you wish to neuter your dog or keep him or her available for breeding.

If you choose to breed Chihuahua, you should first consult your veterinarian to hear his or her advice, and also learn everything there is to know about breeding so you know exactly what you are getting into, what to expect, and how you can keep both the mother and her puppies safe and healthy.

The first aspect you need to understand is that breeding can be frustrating, tedious, unnerving and even distressing because it is not uncommon for puppies to be stillborn, or for the mother to have complications - Breeding is not for the novice, or the weak at heart.

Female Chihuahua's In Heat

Your female Chihuahua will experience estrus - commonly known as heat - usually every 6 to 8 months, which will last for approximately three weeks.

You will recognize the signs of heat in your dog, as she will experience vaginal bleeding for 10 to 14 days after the end of the first week she has been in heat. You will also find that her vulva is swollen, and most likely every male dog on your street will be showing up on your doorstep.

How To Breed Successfully

It has been estimated that the best time for breeding for the female is during the 10th to the 14th day of heat, and you should ensure that your Chihuahua is at least 4 lbs before putting her through the strain of pregnancy, as serious complications can occur if she is under this weight.

Once the day has arrived she should be taken to the home of the male, as it appears males are more successful when they are able to breed in surroundings that are familiar to them.

You will also find that to determine if your female Chihuahua is ready for breeding, there are tests that can be conducted to either examine her vaginal cells, or the new and more accurate test that finds changes of progesterone level in her blood. Be advised that these tests can be quite expensive.

Caring For Your Pregnant Chihuahua

A female dog will usually remain pregnant for 60 - 67 days; therefore, after breeding has been complete, you will need to begin counting and preparing yourself for the birth.

After three weeks from the breeding day, take your female dog to the vet so that the vet can verify if your Chihuahua is pregnant. If she is pregnant, it is time to place her on a puppy formulation of a recommended premium brand of food, which she should eat throughout her pregnancy and nursing, as it provides extra nutrients to both the mother and her puppies.

You will notice that your pregnant Chihuahua will grow a tremendous appetite, and will ingest about one and a half the amount of food she ate before she was pregnant. Feed her more times a day; remember she's not just eating for one anymore, and she needs her strength for whelping.

You may also notice that your female Chihuahua will become more loving and probably demand more attention from you. She will want to be close to you, especially as whelping draws near.

Preparing For Whelping

Before the time of whelping occurs, you will need to procure a proper whelping box that is large enough for your dog to comfortably move around in, and has sides that are low enough that she can easily see out of, and for you to provide her with assistance if needed.

The box bottom should be layered and covered with many newspapers that will help to absorb the fluids from birth, which allows you to remove any top soiled newspaper layers without overly disrupting the mother and her puppies. These newspapers also give the mother an ideal hiding place.

The whelping box should be hid in a closet or other enclosed area until whelping occurs.

Labor And Delivery

For the most part, many Chihuahua mothers experience very few complications during delivery.

You will know when it is almost time for your Chihuahua to give birth, as her temperament will change almost 24 hours before labor. She will probably act nervous and frequently pant, as well as refrain from eating any food.

Her rectal temperature should be under 100°F (37.8 °C) and will most likely remain consistent up until delivery.

It is a good idea to stay with the female Chihuahua if this is her first time delivering, as she may need assistance. If all goes well, she should deliver her first two puppies quickly and with ease.

For the most part, puppies that have larger and rounder heads will take longer to deliver than those with smaller heads. For smaller headed dogs, successful deliveries with no complications can take no more than two hours, but for bigger headed dogs, it is no uncommon for the mother to wait an hour between each delivery. However, regardless of the breed of dog, if after her first two puppies have been born, and three or more hours have passed without the deliver of another puppy, you should contact your vet.

When a puppy becomes visible, it should only take a few contractions to push the puppy free from the birth canal, making it approximately 10 minutes for a puppy to be born after its visible.

About 40% of puppies are born headfirst, so in many cases it is not uncommon for the puppy to come out tail first. If the puppy is tail first, keep a close watch and be prepared to offer assistance.

When the puppy is born the mother should immediately begin to lick the sack (placenta) that the puppy is incased in. Her tongue will rip the sack exposing the mouth, nose and face of the puppy which she will continue to lick clean, and then use to toss about the puppy. The vigorous cleaning provided by the mother is what stimulates circulation and breathing within the puppy. The mother will then chew to sever the umbilical cord and eat the placenta. Both of these proceedings are normal.

After 24 hours of the successful delivery, the mother Chihuahua and her puppies should be examined by the Vet to ensure that everything is fine.

You should also expect the mother to have vaginal blood discharge for up to 7 days after whelping, but any longer than that, you should have her tested for possible problems.

If whelping does not occur smoothly or successfully, as described above, your Chihuahua mother could be experiencing many complications. Therefore, make sure you consult the advice of your vet, other successful breeders, and read plenty of information on the art of breeding before attempting it.

Another important part of breeding Chihuahua's is that they are easily prone to hypoglycemia, due to their low weight. Therefore, soon after the mother has given birth, begin placing a single tsp (teaspoon) of clear kayro syrup in her water, to ensure that the babies are receiving proper nourishment. Once the puppies are drinking on their own, you will then need to apply this amount to their

water until they have received their last set of vaccinations. It is imperative that you do not go 4 hours without feeding any Chihuahua under 3 lbs, as this can lead to low levels of sugar in the blood, and hypoglycemia. Speak to the vet about the best methods you can use to keep your Chihuahua puppies free from hypoglycemia.

In addition, keep in mind If you don't choose to breed or neuter your dog, you should know that the female dog's reproductive system can shorten her lifespan by making her more susceptible to serious health problems, and the male's reproductive system can make him more aggressive, occasionally cause him to ignore commands, claim your items, or even attack other male dogs. Plus, you won't want to run the risk of your dog having an unwanted pregnancy!

Therefore, make sure you choose the best decision for both you and your dogs before you jump headfirst into breeding.



Conclusion

Now that you have learned many interesting and exciting facts about the Chihuahua from this ebook, you have every opportunity to improve upon the health of your faithful companion, train him and make him a welcoming addition to your family.

Remember to take your Chihuahua to the vet for regular checkups, feed him a healthy diet, give him attention, as well as exercise to help him remain happy, in shape, and build up his immune system.

Don't forget that obedience plays a key role in the development of your Chihuahua, and will determine how he will respond to you, and others. Take the time to teach your Chihuahua, so all of the rewarding characteristics linked to his breed can be brought out in him.

The more you learn about the nature of your Chihuahua, the better you will be able to understand him, and know how to respond to any problems that may arise. This will also help him understand you.

Without question, a Chihuahua is your forgiving and loyal friend until it is time for him to depart from this world. He will never want anything more from you than your love, attention and company, and will show you the true meaning of what it feels like to be loved unconditionally.

You will find that before long you will have stories of your own to share, just like some of the owners found in this ebook, and you too will know all about the joys, frustrations and love that is involved when selecting and training a Chihuahua as your companion.

Truly, there is no better companion than that of a faithful, loyal and loving dog. Enjoy raising your Chihuahua, and may he or she live as a friend and asset to you, and be apart of your family for years to come.

