



## SPRING INTO HEALTH: Now's the Time for Your Pet's Annual Check-Up

By Peter H. Eeg, DVM  
National Veterinary Consultant for Invisible Fence® Brand

Spring is the perfect time for your pet's annual health exam, which should include a discussion with your veterinarian about your pets' current age, environment, and lifestyle. It also should include a full examination to look for any abnormal changes in body condition or behavior. Currently, there are more than 40 different veterinary health exam programs in the US mainly due to the prevalence of various diseases in each part of the country. Your veterinarian will be able to help you understand what diseases your pet could be exposed to in your area.

Vaccinations are an important part of the annual health exam. Until recently, annual vaccinations were considered the norm for maintaining a healthy pet. However, major veterinary organizations, such as the American Animal Hospital Association, American Association of Feline Practitioners and the American Veterinary Medical Association, have taken a closer look at the best recommendations for a comprehensive vaccination schedule, and their findings may surprise you.

Current research shows that some vaccines may provide immunity for greater than one year. For this reason, some veterinarians are adopting a "skip-year" vaccine protocol and giving vaccines only every other year as a disease preventative for the pet. During the annual health examination, on the off vaccine year, a titer (test to determine if adequate antibodies for a particular disease are present) is taken to be sure that the pet is still protected. The USDA drug insert for vaccines still recommends yearly vaccination boosters. It is up to you and your veterinarian to decide what will be best for your pets' health.

The 2003 American Animal Hospital Association Canine Vaccine Guidelines indicate that there are three vaccines no longer recommended: Corona virus (killed type and modified live type), Giardia lamblia (killed type), and Adenovirus-1 (also known as canine hepatitis vaccine). Again, it is important that you check with your veterinarian before discontinuing any vaccine. Certain areas of the country may have limited outbreaks of these diseases and therefore vaccinations would be a good idea.

Remember that the overall health exam and consult with your veterinarian during your pets' annual or bi-annual visit can be even more important than the actual vaccinations in discovering hidden medical problems with your pet. If found early, most conditions and diseases can now be treated or managed to allow your pet to enjoy a wonderful quality of life.

If your pet has not seen a doctor in over a year, now's a good time to spring into action and make an appointment today. It will be good for your pet's health and your peace of mind. 🐾

### NEWSLEASH

**Spring Into Health: Now's the Time for Your Pet's Annual Check-Up**  
Peter H. Eeg, DVM . . . . . page 1

**Obesity Strikes Dogs, Too**  
*Shared Diet and Exercise Program Helps Owner and Dog Lose Weight*  
Dogfancy.com . . . . . page 2

**Useful Tips to Help You and Your Dog Lose Weight**  
Piper Romersa, Dog Fancy Magazine . . . page 2

**Invisible Fence® Tip:**  
*Do you know where your Invisible Fence® boundary wire is?* . . . . . page 2

**Doggie Body Language**  
The PET FRIENDLY Canada Directory,  
www.petfriendly.ca . . . . . page 3

**Featured Breed:**  
*Border Collie* . . . . . page 3

**Sending Mixed Messages**  
Karyn Garvin, Pet Behavior Specialist . . page 4

# OBESITY Strikes Dogs, Too

## Shared Diet and Exercise Program Helps Owner and Dog Lose Weight

Dogfancy.com

As bathing suit season approaches, you may want to take your dog for a walk or run – it not only benefits you, but it can also help your pet.

A new study by California-based Veterinary Pet Insurance found that America's obesity problem and related health risks are spreading to its pets. Cardiac-arrest claims for pets have increased 47 percent the past two years, while claims for other obesity-related illnesses have been steadily increasing.

Diabetes claims are up 16 percent, and hypertension claims are up 27 percent over two years, while claims have nearly tripled for a type of spinal surgery that is obesity-related. Treatment for arthritis and cancer are up sharply, which the company said is a result of animals growing older and getting fatter.



Aine McCarthy, a company spokesperson and pet health expert on the television show "Totally Pets," estimated in a 2003 study that as many as 25 percent of pets in the Western world are obese, a problem more common in neutered animals and one that often increases with age.

As with humans, medical bills and insurance costs are getting larger along with the pets. The increase in pet obesity has not forced a rate increase, but cancer is becoming so common that the company created a cancer rider in 1994 to pay for the expensive treatments.

The good news is that 82 percent of dogs and 55 percent of their owners lost weight if they followed a shared exercise and diet program, according to a recent study by Iams Company and Bassett Healthcare.

So get your running shoes on and take Rover with you. 🐾

Obesity is one of the most common canine health problems, and according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Census 2000, nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults weigh too much, too. Here are some useful tips to help you and your dog lose weight:

### Take a hike

*Get outdoors in the fresh air, and clear your mind while your dog relishes in the many scents and sights that lay around the bend, such as a brook to wade in or a fallen tree to sniff. You'll lower your cholesterol, according to the American Hiking Society, and burn calories. The American Heart Association says a person weighing 150 pounds walking at a rate of 2 mph will burn 240 calories an hour. So, you and your dog can shed pounds along the trail.*

Information: Hike With Your Dog (<http://www.hikewithyourdog.com>), American Hiking Society (<http://www.americanhiking.org>)



### Get agile

*Dog agility can bring out the athlete in both of you. Your dog jumps over hurdles, runs through tunnels, and weaves through poles on the course while you run alongside, coaching your dog through the various obstacles. Scoring and testing play are both a huge role in dog agility competitions, but you don't have to compete to get involved. You can also do it at home on your own terms without any pressure. While providing a fun way to exercise, agility training can help you and your dog manage your weight.*

Information: United States Dog Agility Association Inc. (<http://www.usdaa.com>), Dog Play (<http://www.dog-play.com>)



### Take a dip

*Swimming provides low impact, easy-on-the-joints exercise for dogs and owners. Swimming works many muscles at the same time, strengthening you and your dog's physique. If your dog hasn't been around water much, do assess first whether he likes the water and can safely enjoy it – not all dogs are natural swimmers.*

Information: The Partnership for Animal Welfare ([http://www.paw-rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip\\_Hiking.php](http://www.paw-rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip_Hiking.php)) DogFancy magazine, Piper Romersa 🐾



## Invisible Fence TIP

Do you know where your Invisible Fence® boundary wire is? As you plan your springtime projects or need to mark the location of your underground wire for landscaping, utility work or other digging, your local Invisible Fence® dealer can help. The wire, which is typically buried several inches deep, can still be cut by a wayward shovel or spike. Your local Invisible Fence® professional can quickly and easily mark your yard with flag markers to avoid any breaks in system integrity.



# Doggie Body Language

By The PET FRIENDLY Canada Directory, [www.petfriendly.ca](http://www.petfriendly.ca)

*Like humans, dogs say a lot with their body. Here are a few tips on how to read a dog's body language. This is only a guide – please exercise common sense and caution when you approach a dog:*

## ***"I'm Feeling Relaxed, Normal ..."***

My posture is calm and relaxed, just standing around. Please ask my owner before you approach me or pet me, just to be on the safe side.

## ***"I'm Afraid!"***

My tail is probably tucked between my legs, and the front part of my body may be a little lower to the ground. My ears may be down or back as well. I'm feeling scared or threatened by something or someone ... please give me some space, because I'll bite if I think I need to.

## ***"Stay Away!"***

I'm feeling protective ... I look like I'm afraid (which I might also be) because my tail is tucked between my legs ... but you will notice that my hackles are raised too. Keep away from me - I might bite!

## ***"Will You Play with Me?"***

My tail is wagging and my forequarters are on the ground, my bottom in the air. Please remember to ask my owner first if you can play with me - just to be safe!

## ***"I'm a Shy Dog ..."***

I'm a little timid. I will probably roll over on my back to show my submissiveness. Please ask my owner before approaching me - I may be a little frightened too.



## ***"I'm Feeling Aggressive!"***

My hackles are raised, my teeth are showing, and my tail is all fluffed up. Don't run away from me - stand still and be calm, and do not make eye contact. I could bite! 🐾

## Featured Breed:



# Border Collie

**Breed Group:** Herding

**Nickname:** BC

**Origin:** Some claim the Border Collie is descended from reindeer herding dogs brought to Scotland by Viking invaders. Others claim they came from old British droving breeds mixed with some spaniel. Regardless of their origin, Border Collies have been used for hundreds of years to manage sheep herds in the fertile grazing area of Northumberland, which borders Scotland and England. They are known for their intelligence and can manipulate a herd or some of its members with their "hypnotic" eyes. Crouching down, they mesmerize the animals with their intense stare, allowing them to move, steer, stop or guide the herd. Border Collies also excel at obedience and agility trials, Frisbee™ and Flyball competitions and performing tricks. They have also been used in police work for narcotics and bomb detection and as search and rescue dogs.

**Color:** Usually black and white. May be gray and white, blue merle and white or even white with tan shading. Solid white is not American Kennel Club (AKC) acceptable.

**Height:** 18 – 20 inches (46 – 56 cm)

**Weight:** 35 – 45 pounds (16 – 20 kg)

**Temperament:** This breed thrives on human companionship

and is loyal and affectionate to their masters. They may be reserved with strangers, thereby making them excellent watch-dogs. Being the world's premier sheep herding dog, they are never happier than when they are working and if there are no sheep to herd, they will herd children and other animals. Because of this strong herding instinct, they should be supervised with children. The Border Collie may be aggressive with dogs of the same sex. They are ideal pets for masters who plan to spend a lot of time with them. Border Collies need plenty of exercise and a job to do and can be destructive if they are ignored or become bored. Some dogs become neurotic if they are left alone for long periods of time.

**Training:** Border Collies thrive on praise, are eager to learn and are very trainable. As a puppy, they should be socialized to prevent shyness. The adolescent dog often goes through a phase where he will challenge his master's authority.

**Exercise:** Agile, fast and lively describe this breed. With their boundless energy and great stamina, regular and extensive daily exercise is a must. They are very active indoors as well as outdoors and are not recommended for apartment life.

**Grooming:** Both the smooth coat and rough coat dogs need regular combing and brushing. This breed is an average shedder.

**Possible Health Concerns:** The Border Collie is generally a hardy breed, but some are prone to epilepsy, eye problems, hip dysplasia, and deafness. Many are also allergic to fleas.

**Life Expectancy:** About 12 – 15 years 🐾



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Invisible Fence® Brand is proud to be the **only professionally installed electronic pet containment system** to receive the Consumers Digest Best Buy award. Less than 3% of all products receive this award, which is based on performance, ease-of-use, features, durability, warranty efficiency, styling and maintenance and servicing.

## Sending Mixed Messages

By Karyn Garvin, Pet Behavior Specialist

Most people agree that they would do almost anything to keep their pets safe at home. We love our dogs, and, for most of us, they are important members of our family. The idea of something happening to them is horrifying. Yet, thousands of dogs, even well trained dogs, still run away from home. Why?

Dog owners are certainly more informed and more sophisticated than ever. We seem to have all the right tools to raise happy, well-trained, well-socialized pets. Puppies are going to puppy socialization classes and many communities have dog parks to exercise and socialize dogs. Most dog owners take their dogs to obedience training to teach their pets to come when called. As a matter of fact, it's one of the key reasons people train their dogs to ensure they won't run off.

So, why, after all the training, does this same dog run off as soon as it gets out

the front door? How did it learn that? One possible answer is that you may have been sending mixed messages. You may have unknowingly taught your dog to do that.

When you and your dog go out the front door, what do you do? If you're like most dog owners, you leave the property to go for a walk. You've taught the dog that when you go out the front door, you keep on going. That's what's fun! That's how you get exercise! Herein lies the mixed message. You don't want the dog to leave the property, but that's what you always do with him/her.

The good news is that you can retrain and establish new habits. Go out the front door, check the mail, and come back. Go out, come in, go out, and come back. This is



what you want to communicate and demonstrate. If you have flowers in the front yard, water them and come back into the house. Practice your obedience training in the front yard, putting your dog in a sit-stay position and then calling him/her back into the house. You want your dog's predominant experience to be that of going out the front door and turning around and going back inside.

An Invisible Fence® Brand solution, of course, will do a wonderful job of reinforcing your training. This will also give your dog hours of safe, quality time on your property. 🐾