



The Health of Your Basenji

A variety of factors affect the health of your dog. In addition to regular preventative veterinary care, a balanced diet, clean dry bedding in a draft free area, daily exercise, love and companionship will go a long way to keeping your pet healthy.

This chapter is not intended as a substitute for veterinary care.

IMPORTANT! Seek immediate veterinary treatment for your Basenji when you first notice your dog is "not quite right". Timely veterinary care can help prevent health problems.

Finding a veterinarian



As a Basenji's caretaker, it is your responsibility to provide proper veterinary care. Choosing the correct veterinarian for your Basenji is an important decision. Ask for recommendations from your breeder, local dog club or rescue group if you are in the same area.

It is important to have confidence in your veterinarian. ***Find out if your vet is available for after-hours emergencies, and if not, who will be available.*** The time to establish a working relationship with a good veterinarian is ***before*** you need it, not when you have an emergency.

It is a very good idea to take your puppy to a veterinarian within a few days of bringing him home. The vet can review the pup's health records and recommend when further immunizations will be required. He can check to be sure the pup is healthy. If you make this first visit, before an immunizations or difficult procedures are required it will give the puppy a good experience with the veterinarian which should help his attitude each time he must return to the vet's office.

Pet Insurance

As the costs of maintaining a pet rise, it may be advisable to consider pet insurance. There are many different programs available. You can find information on pet insurance on the American Kennel Club Website. You should also consult your veterinarian regarding an appropriate policy for your Basenji.



The first vet visit can fix a good impression or a bad impression for a lifetime.

Health Concerns for Basenji

The Basenji has relatively few inherited genetic diseases

More information of these diseases can be found at the BCOA website: www.basenji.org

Persistent Pupillary Membrane (PPM)	PPM is a condition where the fetal membrane of the eye does not completely reabsorb. It is extremely common in Basenjis. This disorder does not progress, and in fact often puppies with mild PPM become normal as they get older. Basenjis with minor PPM will pass a CERF exam.
Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)	PRA is an eye condition in which the retina begins to deteriorate, causing visual loss and generally leading to blindness. A form of late-onset progressive retinal deterioration is known to occur in Basenjis with onset typically late to very late in life. The genetics of this condition are not understood and there is no test except annual check up with an ophthalmologist.
Other Eye Conditions: Coloboma Corneal Dystrophy	Coloboma is the absence, complete or partial, of a portion of the eye. The mode of inheritance of coloboma is not yet understood. A specialist can find any Colobomas on young puppies. This is not a progressive disease. Corneal dystrophy, can onset later in life. Thus, a normal CERF exam does not guarantee that the dog will not later develop a hereditary eye problem. And a CERF exam cannot measure whether or not a dog carries genes for a hereditary eye problem
Obesity	Obesity is harmful for any breeds. Many conditions can develop in an obese dog that will not occur otherwise.

<p>Fanconi Syndrome</p>	<p>Fanconi syndrome is a disorder in which the kidney's proximal renal tubules do not properly reabsorb electrolytes and nutrients back into the body, but instead "spill" them into the urine. There is now a DNA marker test for Fanconi and all breeding stock should be tested with results posted to the OFA website: www.offa.org.</p>
<p>IPSID: immunoproliferative small intestinal disease</p>	<p>IPSID is one of several different types of inflammatory bowel disease, which result in the dog not being able to utilize and absorb nutrients correctly from food. A change of diet is sometimes enough to solve this problem. There is controversy about this disease regarding its genetics and causes.</p>
<p>Hemolytic Anemia</p>	<p>Pyruvate kinase-deficient hemolytic anemia was first diagnosed in Basenjis in the 1960s, although prior to that date Basenjis had died of a then-unknown form of anemia. Research began in the 1960s, with a carrier test available in 1972. This disease is almost unknown now and it is one of the breed's success stories.</p>
<p>Thyroid</p>	<p>Basenjis are known to have a higher than average rate of hypothyroidism. The most common symptoms include weight gain, poor coat, and reduced activity level. While dogs with thyroid problems are not satisfactory for breeding, it is easily controlled and your pet should leave a normal life.</p>
<p>Hip and Elbow Dysplasia and Patellar Luxation</p>	<p>Breeding stock should be x-rayed or examined for these conditions. The OFA provides certificates for dogs that have passed these tests which the breeder should be able to show you.</p>

<p>Umbilical Hernias Inguinal Hernias</p>	<p>Umbilical hernias are very common in Basenjis. They can be repaired at any time; the surgery is often done when a pet is spayed or neutered or during any other procedure requiring anesthesia. Dogs who have umbilical hernias repaired are allowed in all AKC competitions.</p> <p>Inguinal hernias are uncommon in Basenjis. They are a serious defect and generally do require surgical repair. Dogs with repaired inguinal hernias are not eligible for participation in AKC conformation events.</p>
<p>Allergies</p>	<p>A few Basenjis may be prone to allergies, dermatitis and seborrhea. Your dog should be treated by a qualified veterinarian if allergy symptoms appear.</p>
<p>Cardiac Certification</p>	<p>Some Basenjis have been reported with heart murmurs. This can be diagnosed by a veterinarian. The OFA has an open cardiac registry of dogs whose hearts have been evaluated at age 12 months or older.</p>

Early Warning Symptoms Checklist

Consult with your veterinarian promptly if you find any symptoms listed below

- ➔ A loss of appetite, trouble eating
- ➔ Mouth pain or excessive drooling
- ➔ Squinting or discharge from the eyes
- ➔ Convulsions or seizures
- ➔ Fever
- ➔ Sudden or prolonged weight loss or weight gain without the intent to do so

List continued next page...

- ➔ Diarrhea for more than a day — If bloody call your vet immediately
- ➔ Vomiting several times or if you see bloody or dark regurgitated matter
- ➔ Excessive water drinking
- ➔ Difficult breathing or coughing, or excessive panting
- ➔ Lameness
- ➔ Excessive scratching of the body
- ➔ Excessive head shaking or rubbing the ears
- ➔ Frequent or strained urination, the inability to urinate, blood in the urine or incontinence

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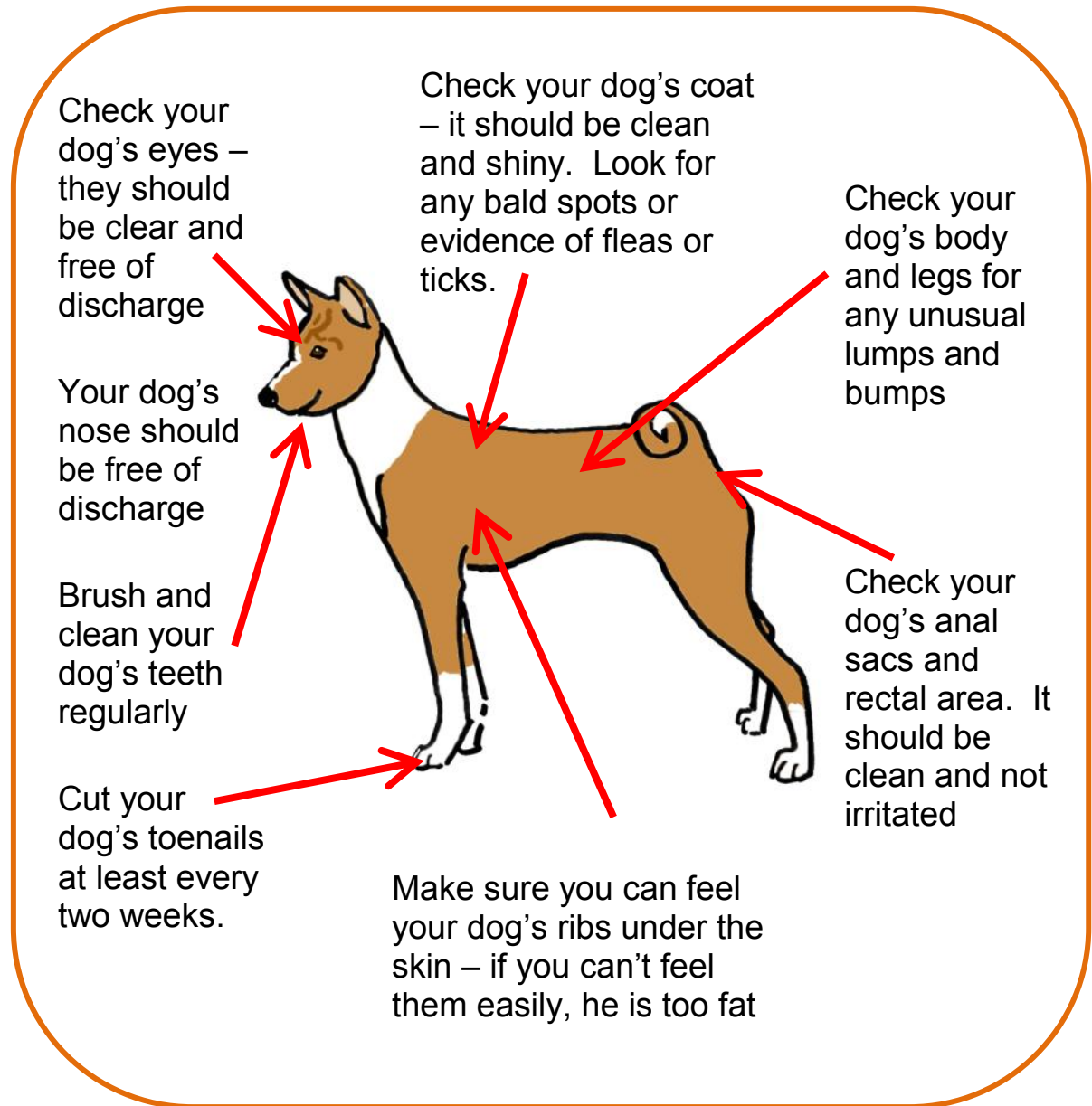
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Lameness

An Owner's Checklist

Going over your dog regularly can help alert you to any potential problems

- ✓ Check your dog's body and legs for any unusual lumps and bumps.
- ✓ Check your dog's coat. It should be clean and shiny. Look for any bald spots or evidence of fleas or ticks.
- ✓ Check your dog's eyes. They should be clear and free of discharge.
- ✓ Your dog's nose should be free of discharge.
- ✓ Brush and clean your dog's teeth regularly.
- ✓ Cut your dog's toenails at least every two weeks.
- ✓ Make sure you can feel your dog's ribs under the skin. If you can't feel them easily, he is too fat.
- ✓ Check your dog's anal sacs and rectal area. It should be clean and not irritated.



Preventative Health

Measures that Owners Can Take

- ➔ Buy a Basenji from a reputable breeder who will stand behind the health of his/her dog. If you adopt from a rescue group, discuss the health issues which may or may not affect your new hound. Pet store and puppy mill Basenjjs are more susceptible to numerous health problems and genetic defects.
- ➔ Don't over feed your Basenji. Obesity is harmful to your Basenji's heart, spine and joints.
- ➔ Trim toenails at least once every ten days to two weeks.
- ➔ Check for impacted anal glands.
- ➔ Brush teeth regularly.
- ➔ Depending on the part of the country you call home, or where you and your pet travel, give your Basenji regular heartworm medication and check for fleas and ticks.
- ➔ Immunize your Basenji for preventable diseases. Follow your veterinarian's recommendations for your dog.
- ➔ A Basenji is safest in a secure, fenced area.
- ➔ Make sure you continually —puppyproof” your home to keep your pet safe from toxic substances.
- ➔ If there is any sign of a medical problem, contact your veterinarian immediately.



BEWARE of Unprofessional Advice

Your veterinarian should be consulted when your Basenji becomes ill. NEVER medicate your dog without the advice of a veterinarian. Don't try home remedies, remedies from the neighbor, internet chat rooms, etc. Don't use human prescription or nonprescription medicines without the advice of a veterinarian. Even over the counter medicines can be deadly. For example, acetaminophen can cause liver failure in dogs.

Recognizing when your Basenji is “not quite right”

It is your responsibility to monitor your hound's general condition and learn the importance of recognizing when he is feeling a bit off. While you don't want to assume a loss of appetite is an emergency, in some cases it may be. Because your Basenji can't ~~tell~~ you when he is ill, watch for any changes in behavior such as loss or increase of appetite, restlessness, an unwillingness to move or exercise as usual and withdrawal or depression.

Delays in obtaining necessary treatment can have tragic results for your Basenji. Since your dog cannot speak, it is important that you be able to describe his symptoms as accurately as possible.

**If you believe that your hound is not well,
check his vital signs, especially his temperature.**

VITAL SIGNS for an Adult Basenji

These values are considered the norm for a healthy adult dog at rest. You should know what is normal for your dog. Your veterinarian will be happy to show you how to monitor these signs.

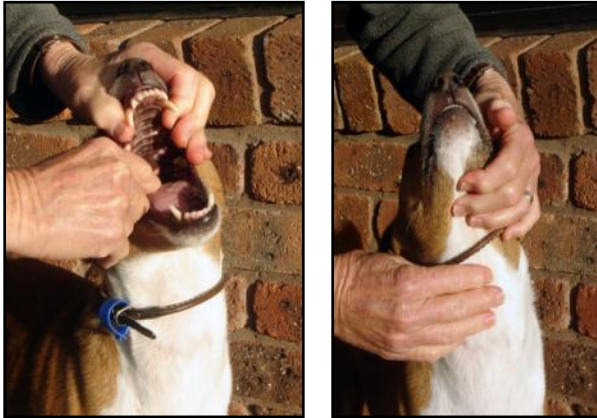
Note: Rates and temperatures vary on puppies.

Temperature	101-102.2 Fahrenheit	Use a rectal or digital thermometer with a dab of Vaseline on the tip. Insert it carefully into the rectum. Read after 2 minutes.
Pulse	70-130 beats/minute	Place your fingers just inside the elbow and gently press.
Respiration	10-30 breaths/minute	Watch for movement of the chest.



Administering Medications Giving a Prescribed Pill

There are several ways to give your dog a prescribed pill.



Hide the pill in a small piece of meat or cheese. If your Basenji refuses this treat or cleverly eats the treat and leaves the pill, open his mouth, place the pill at the back of the throat and close the mouth. Stroke the throat and watch for him to swallow, making sure the pill has been ingested. Allow the dog's tongue to come out of his mouth slightly as he swallows. *(Illustrated right)*

***When giving prescribed medication,
follow the directions carefully.***

***Don't stop the medication
unless directed by your veterinarian!***

Administering Eye Drops or Ointment



1. Hold one hand under your Basenji's muzzle and rest your hand with the eyedropper on the dog's skull or the finger along the muzzle as shown in the photo right. This will help prevent an injury if your hound moves.

2. Make sure you use the correct number of drops or amount of ointment.



***Keep your veterinarian's telephone number next to the phone.
Ask your vet to help you put together a first aid kit for your dog.***

Health Care Schedule

*Regularly scheduled checkups are a great way to monitor your Basenji's health.
Ask your veterinarian what he/she recommends.*

Recommended Veterinary Health Care Check Up Schedule	
Dental	Many Basenjies develop periodontal disease especially as they get a bit older. Your veterinarian should examine your dog's teeth yearly, and if necessary, clean the teeth so they can maintain tooth health into old age.
Heartworm and/or Lyme's Disease	Yearly blood tests to check for heartworm and Lyme's disease (if prevalent in your area) are recommended.
Physical	A general physical should be performed annually.
Vaccination Boosters	Many infectious diseases may be prevented by maintaining a proper vaccination schedule. Discuss this schedule with your veterinarian as standards have changed over the years.
Stool check	The presence of intestinal parasites can cause your pet to lose condition. A yearly stool check can prevent this.

Preventable Diseases through Vaccination

Before you bring your new dog home, check with your vet to be sure that your new Basenji has been adequately inoculated by the breeder. However be sure that your veterinarian does not repeat inoculations your puppy has already received. Be sure to bring the dog's health records with you when he makes his first visit to your vet.

The following chart describes the diseases that are preventable by regular vaccination. Maintaining your dog's vaccinations is one of the most important things you can do for his or her health. Boosters are often given at your dog's annual exam. Duration of immunity is currently being studied, and vaccination schedules may vary based on your vet's recommendation.



Protect your Basenji by understanding good Basenji care

Preventable Diseases through Vaccination Veterinary Treatment for These Diseases is Recommended!

Disease	Symptoms
Adenovirus <i>Canine adenovirus type 2 (CAV-2)</i> <i>Very contagious</i>	Coughing with an occasional fever. In some cases an opportunistic bacterial infection will take control in the lungs causing pneumonia. <i>(The CAV-1 Vaccine and CAV-2 are not used together. The use of one will cover for both CAV-1 and CAV-2.)</i>

<p>Bordatella or Kennel cough <i>Very contagious</i></p>	<p>Dry cough, harsh in nature; in young puppies, nasal congestion may be present. The vaccine won't prevent all viruses which cause coughing, but it's a good first step, particularly if your dog is in frequent contact with other dogs.</p>
<p>Distemper <i>Highly contagious. Ranges from mild to fatal</i></p>	<p>Early signs include fever, followed by nasal and eye discharge. Later signs include epileptic-like seizures, slobbering and shaking of the head. Another form of distemper called hard-pad, causes callus-like pads to form on the feet and a thick skin to form on the nose. Unvaccinated puppies are most susceptible.</p>
<p>Infectious Canine Hepatitis <i>Canine adenovirus type 1 or (CAV-1) Highly contagious virus transmitted only to dogs.</i></p>	<p><i>Symptoms may be confused with distemper.</i> In its mild form, a dog may simply be lethargic or show a loss of appetite. In its fatal form, a dog may exhibit bloody diarrhea and die suddenly. In its acute form a dog may have a fever, bloody diarrhea, and vomit blood. Bleeding under the skin and from the gums may occur. Jaundicing of the eyes and a painful abdomen are also symptoms. Dogs sometimes develop a clouding of the cornea called —blue eye”.</p>
<p>Leptosporosis <i>Humans can contract this from infected dogs</i></p>	<p>Fever, loss of appetite, listlessness and depression are early signs. As the disease progresses, ulcers may appear in the mouth or tongue; severe thirst, bloody diarrhea and vomiting may occur. Your dog may stand and look painful in the abdominal area if the kidneys become affected. Treatment usually includes antibiotics and supportive therapy. (Some feel that leptosporosis vaccines are unnecessary. Check with your vet).</p>

<p>Lyme Disease <i>Good tick control is imperative to the health of you and your dog. A disease transmitted by the tick, most prevalent in wooded areas.</i></p>	<p>Lameness and fever are symptoms. Some dogs may test positive for Lyme disease and show no outward symptoms. Damage to joints and the neurological system may occur. Early antibiotic treatment may prevent permanent damage. Some dogs will have permanent lameness due to joint damage. Vaccination isn't a guarantee that your dog will not contract this disease but it substantially reduces the risk.</p>
<p>Parainfluenza Contagious</p>	<p>Coughing is the primary symptom. Fever may develop in severe cases. Death is rare, and supportive treatment is generally enough.</p>
<p>Parvovirus <i>Highly contagious virus that can affect dogs of all ages.</i></p>	<p>Symptoms may follow two different paths. Diarrhea: depression followed by loss of appetite, vomiting and a painful abdomen. Fever and profuse (sometimes bloody) diarrhea follow. Cardiac: affects the muscle of the heart. Young puppies stop nursing. Death can occur suddenly. Some who recover develop chronic congestive heart failure. Treatment successes vary depending on the form and severity of the disease, as well as the age and condition of the dog. Puppies under the age of five months have the highest mortality rate.</p>
<p>Rabies <i>Transmitted through the bite of an infected animal</i></p>	<p>NOTE: There is no treatment for dogs. Personality changes may occur, a friendly dog may become aggressive, and vice versa. As the disease progresses, the dog may stare into space, avoid light and seek its own space. Diarrhea, vomiting and fever may be present. Two types of encephalitis may occur; — Mad dog” type is when an animal is vicious, has spasms in the face and bites at any animal in its way. A paralytic form causes the mouth to drop open and tongue to hang out. Drooling and coughing, as well as uncontrolled movements are present.</p>

The Basenji Senior Citizen

As your Basenji matures into his “golden” years, there are several things you can do to assure his health and well-being.

Much the same as humans, as a Basenji grows older, he may be affected by arthritis, loss of vision and hearing, lessened bladder and bowel control, and slowing metabolism that leads to weight gain. Your Basenji’s yearly veterinary check up becomes more important as your Basenji approaches six or seven years of age.

As he gets older, your Basenji’s muzzle may grey and he may become less interested in playing if he is particularly achy or tired. Potty habits of your Basenji may change with age. He may need to go more frequently. Pay close attention to these habits — they can alert you to a potential problem. If his hearing diminishes, make sure that your dog is not startled when sleeping. Some senior dogs develop cataracts which can cause some vision impairment.

Arthritis can lead to stiffness, lameness or some discomfort for an older Basenji. Climbing stairs and jumping in and out of cars may become increasingly difficult. Be ready to help your hound. Your veterinarian may be able to make him more comfortable. Some hounds find acupuncture useful to control pain.

Regular tooth brushing, grooming and nail trimming should continue. Not only will it alert you to the existence of a lump or infection, it will help maintain his coat and skin. Proper diet, exercise and good preventative care can help provide your senior Basenji a long, happy life.

