

10 Ways to Keep Your German Shepherd Dog Healthy

Jennifer Miller | June 08, 2016 For the AKC



Photo credit: Kadience Abbot Dogs Owned By: Annette Sackrider-Miller, AKC Breeder of Merit

All dogs have their special health quirks and the German Shepherd Dog is no exception. While we can't anticipate our dog's every need, there are a few helpful tips to keep your dog feeling his or her best.

1. **Maintain a healthy weight.** The breed standard says [German Shepherds](#) should "look substantial and not spindly, giving the

impression, both at rest and in motion, of muscular fitness and nimbleness."

2. German Shepherds are medium-size dogs, meaning they mature slower than small dog breeds. **Avoid heavy work and impact to the joints** until your dog is at least one to two years old.



Photo credit & dog owned by: Kadience Abbot

3. **Regular walks and exercise** will help the German Shepherd Dog stay in shape, but also maintain a routine, two things that are important to the breed.

4. **Early socialization with other people and dogs** will help your German Shepherd Dog avoid behavioral problems.



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5. As a deep-chested dog, the GSD is **more susceptible to bloat**, a fatal condition caused by air, fluid and/or foam in the stomach. Make sure to know the signs, symptoms and causes of bloat.

6. **Do research and find a responsible breeder** before purchasing a **German Shepherd Dog puppy**. Responsible breeders make sure to

health test their dogs and can be a good source of information about the breed.

7. Regular vet check-ups are important for all dogs, but some German Shepherds may have GI tract and hip issues, so check-ups are especially important. **Staying up to date with x-rays and being aware of possible stomach irritants** will help your GSD stay healthy.

8. German Shepherds have an acute sense of smell, so they often smell hydrants, fences, and garbage while on walks. **Keep an eye on what they pick up with their mouths** while they are sniffing around to avoid your dog getting sick or injured.

9. **Select food wisely.** Stay within the age range for your dog, as well as watching for allergens, energy level, and weight. Every dog is different and there isn't a right type of food or method, but your veterinarian should be able to answer questions and address concerns that you may have.

10. With a double coat and dark coloring, the GSD is **more susceptible to overheating** in the summer months. Plenty of water, shade, and cool air should help your dog make it through any hot days.