



**Arf! Dog health comes home  
When you're the caregiver for a sick dog**

By Cathy Goodwin, Ph.D.  
<http://www.dog-health.org>

NOTE: This ebook is the intellectual property of Cathy Goodwin, Ph.D. Please do not reprint, copy or otherwise distribute the contents without her permission.

You may purchase additional copies at [www.dog-health.org](http://www.dog-health.org)

DISCLAIMER: The contents of this ebook are not intended to replace guidance from licensed professionals, such as veterinary, medical, mental health, financial, or real estate professionals. The contents are offered as opinion rather than prescription.

Where I use first name only, the name is a pseudonym. First and last names: the name is real.

| <b>Chapter</b>  | <b>Page Number</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| Why I Wrote This Report                                       | 4                  |
| Ch 1: Your Dog's Mind<br>Creates Your Dog's Health            | 6                  |
| Ch 2: Other people in your<br>life                            | 11                 |
| Ch 3: Your veterinarian:<br>captain of the caregiving<br>team | 15                 |
| Ch 4: How much will you do?                                   | 19                 |
| Ch 5: Home from the hospital                                  | 25                 |
| Ch 6: Getting down to your<br>dog's business                  | 30                 |
| Ch 7: How much is too<br>much?                                | 33                 |
| Ch 8: The old-timer dog                                       | 37                 |
| Ch 9: Saying good-by  | 39                 |
| Ch 10: Honoring a great dog                                   | 41                 |
| Ch 11: Caring for the care-<br>giver                          | 43                 |
| Resources   | 46                 |
| Dedication  | 56                 |

## **Why I Wrote This Report**

Keesha was my first dog. When she suddenly became sick, after we had been together only seven years, I was completely lost. She was six or seven when I took her home from the pound, so our time together was all too short.

I was heartbroken when she was first diagnosed with kidney disease. She had always been such a perfect, healthy dog! And I was scared. How could I help her?

Mostly I felt isolated. I couldn't find any references to help. Some books wrote about grief but none wrote about the stresses of care giving.

So I turned to research. I talked to everyone I could find who had shared my experience. I surfed the Internet for many hours, looking for information, products and services.

The result is Dog Health: Homeward Bound.

During a crisis, we feel exhausted and overwhelmed. Most of us have no idea what questions to ask, let alone who to ask.

Dog Health Homeward Bound gives you a place to start when you're feeling most alone and confused. Some chapters are followed by a worksheet for you to follow, so you won't have to struggle with the "What do I do?" question. Filling out the worksheet should help you feel empowered. Other chapters include resources you can consult on your own.

Many chapters refer you to websites for more information. I spent hours surfing the web to find websites that would be helpful – after my own dog was gone. During the crisis, I wouldn't have had the time or patience. So you can save time by going directly to the websites, not surfing.

## **You are not alone!**

Reuters reported that British dog lovers took 2.7 million working days off to care for their sick pets over the last two years. Fifty-five percent admitted they paid more attention to sick pets than to an ill partner.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7668164>

Former Philadelphia Flyer Mike "Doc" Emrick opted out of broadcasting the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, reported the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in 2005. Apparently the dog in question was Katie, a 4-year-old terrier.

<http://tinyurl.com/9gw9b>

## **Chapter 1. Your dog's mind creates your dog's health.**

When we're faced with a sick dog, we're wondering about tending to his physical needs.

How can we get him to swallow a big pill?  
Will we have to administer shots ourselves?

Before tending to her physical needs, we need to focus on the dog's state of mind.

Christopher Aust, an experienced dog trainer, warns that the mental part of an illness is just as important to the healing process as the physical realm. Dogs know something is wrong when they're sick, but they can't rationalize. Dogs in the wild do not take care of each other when they're sick. They're too busy fighting for survival.

So a dog instinctively will expect to be chased away by the rest of the pack. He will go under the house or find a quiet corner of the yard and wait for the end.

### **What does this mean for you as an owner?**

Many of us are tempted to baby a sick dog. We tuck him away with blankets in a quiet corner of the house. But although we're trying to do our best, we actually cause more harm than good.

When we're sick, we want to be alone. But to a dog, being isolated feels like being banished. "Oh no," he thinks. "The pack has left me behind!"

**Keep your dog active and stimulate her mind** so she doesn't feel that death is imminent. Dogs who feel stimulated and optimistic seem to have a better chance at recovery than those who feel sad and depressed.

It's similar to what happens when we send elderly family members to a second-rate nursing home. They only see family on holidays. They get bored and dispirited. And with both dogs and humans, experienced owners know: Once the spirit is lost, the body soon follows.

In an article "Turn Back Time," writer Ellen Kanner advises, "Obedience training is one of the best stress reducers. Knowing the rules to follow reassures your dog. Going over the rules, making your dog sit, heel and stay, also provide mental stimulation."

[http://www.dogchannel.com/dog/care/senior/article\\_580.aspx](http://www.dogchannel.com/dog/care/senior/article_580.aspx)

### **Keep a routine going.**

Dog trainer Christopher Aust says, "Keep the dog's lifestyle consistent and familiar." Dogs love routines. Follow your old routines as much as you can. Keep up the special things you enjoyed doing together.

For example:

√ If your dog has been accustomed to going outside for walks three times a day, keep up the routine as much as possible, even if you walk more slowly. If the dog is too sick to go on walks three times a day, maybe you can carry him out and expose him to the fresh air at the same time you used to take your walks.

√ Or suppose every night she sat on your lap and you watched television together. Now she can't sit on your lap. You can move her to your side and let her sit next to you on the couch.

√ If physical activity must be limited, add new toys to stimulate the dog mentally without a lot of physical exercise. You can also teach the dog new commands or tricks that don't require a lot of physical activity.

√Have a special time to just be with the dog: playing, rubbing, talking, or just sitting.

"We learned a lot of lessons from Maggie, our German Shepherd, in her older years. She taught us to be far more patient, to appreciate the moment, to realize that it's still fun to do some of the things she always loved. For her, that meant going for walks, however slowly and however short."

-- Sally Deneen, Freelance Journalist

**Planning ahead:** If you have a young, healthy dog, start creating rituals you can enjoy together. You will draw on those routines when the dog becomes old and sick.

Keesha and I had developed a game of "chase the treat." She would sit and stay and I would walk away from her. When I called, "Release!" she'd race to me and grab her treat, looking very pleased with herself.

As she grew older, she couldn't run as fast, and then she couldn't run at all. She'd walk carefully over to get her treat. But she still got that familiar gleam in her eye: she was Doing Her Job and very proud of herself.

### **Resist the temptation to spoil your dog.**

And when the dog is sick, it's tempting to spoil her.

"She shouldn't have to sit for treats."

"Anything he wants."

Owners think they're being kind, says trainer Aust. But in fact they're denying the dog's self-esteem.

**Give your dog a job.**

In a dog pack, your dog would have a job. Most family dogs don't have a job because we -- the pack leaders -- do everything for them. Their work is to sit, "down," come when called and heel. So when we stop asking them to work, they feel left out. Their role in the pack seems up in the air.

If the dog is physically able to "sit" and "down," obedience and commands provide structure to his day. Dogs need a job, even if it's just following commands and behaving politely on walks. If we take away obedience, we're taking away the dog's job.

**Create a peaceful environment.**

Without isolating your dog, you can create a place of calm. Rita Reynolds, author of *Blessing the Bridge*, recommends Baroque music as well as chants.

## **WORKSHEET: Your dog's mental health**

**What are routines and rituals you have enjoyed with your dog? For example, do you play a game of chase the ball every day? Begin each morning with a walk? List 3. (If you have many – Keesha and I had at least a dozen – list the top 3.)**

**Routine #1:**

**Routine #2:**

**Routine #3:**

**How can you modify each routine for your dog today? For example: A game of chase-the-ball can become a game of roll-the-ball.**

**Modification #1:**

**Modification #2:**

**Modification #3:**

## **Chapter 2. Other People in Your Life: The Social Side of Caring for a Sick Dog**

With any care giving, the greatest challenge tends to be finding a support system and deflecting negative intrusions from members of your social network.

One of the hardest parts of caring for my own dog, Keesha, was explaining to friends and neighbors.

“She’s okay. She’s walking slowly because she’s old.”

“I have a stroller because her arthritis is really bad.”

“Sorry, I can’t go out. I can’t leave her alone for so many hours.”

Everyone understands how you might care for a sick parent or child, but – a dog?

### **Who will be part of your support system?**

Friends won’t understand why you’re preoccupied unless they’ve been through the same experience with their own dogs. Even then, they may have different value systems.

Among my own network, some of my friends who had been completely supportive in every area of my life were silent when I called to talk about my dog. They had no idea what to say. Others were sensitive and caring beyond my expectations.

Your veterinarian most likely cannot offer support. She just won’t have time. You’ll need family, friends and professionals.



"When I had to leave to give Wolf his medicine, Sue asked Jed, "He's so much trouble. Why don't you get rid of the dog?"

Jed replied, "Why don't you get rid of your kids?"

Fortunately, Stephanie reports, Sue handled the question well. The next day Sue's children made cards with animal pictures, reminders that "God created all animals."

## **WORKSHEET: THE SOCIAL SIDE OF DOG CARE**

1. What does your life look like now, in terms of commitments and social interaction?
2. What will your life be like while you are caring for your sick dog? Write down the realities now, so you won't be surprised later.
3. Who in your life will be affected by your new commitment to your dog? List family, friends, significant others, employers, neighbors and volunteer organizations.
4. Who on this list will be part of your support system? Remember you will need support: caregiving can be lonely, whether you're with an aging human or an aging dog.
5. Who on this list can be expected to be unsupportive or even hostile? What kind of consequences can you anticipate? Are you prepared to deal with those consequences?
6. What questions and comments do you anticipate from friends and well-meaning strangers? List 3 questions and decide how you might answer them.

Examples:

- "Wouldn't it be better to spend this money on people?"
- "Where I grew up, dogs weren't even allowed in the house."
- "He's just a dog, after all."
- "She's your best friend: you should make sacrifices."
- "But can't you just take the day off?"

Later we will explore options of hiring resources to offer social support.

### **3. Your veterinarian: captain of the caregiving team.**

When I asked experienced dog caregivers to list the most important component of home dog health, they were nearly unanimous: choosing a veterinarian.

Here's some advice they suggested.

✓ Choose a veterinarian you trust and feel comfortable with. Most vets are kind and friendly but a few are grumps. If you dread calling the veterinarian, you'll delay – and your dog will suffer.

✓ Choose a veterinarian who shares your value systems. If you want complementary treatment options for your dog, choose a veterinarian who will be open to acupuncture, herbs, and/or chiropractic. Don't hesitate to change veterinarians, so you can work together for the dog's welfare.

✓ But don't assume your current veterinarian won't support you. Explain what you need and ask for help before leaving a vet who's taken care of your dog all these years. Ask first.

✓ Choose a veterinarian who won't create additional pressure – you're feeling stressed already.

✓ Some veterinarians encourage you to read and research on your own. There's a wealth of information on the Internet. Some veterinarians get annoyed while others welcome your research. You have to decide whether you want to explore on your own and choose a veterinarian accordingly.

**What other dog-owners have said:**

Hal: "Our first veterinarian wanted us to spend thousands of dollars on our old dog. We loved our dog but we felt he had enjoyed a wonderful life. He wouldn't have much time left, no matter what we did. We finally had to change vets so we could find someone to respect our values."

Julianne: "Our regular vet, who was fine for shots and yearly checkups, didn't want to take over the emergency room prescriptions, which included codeine. Nor was she interested in helping us determine a long-term care plan.

"We eventually, after much trial and error, found another vet who will work on a long-term plan with Fido. Right now, we are working together on regulating Fido's blood pressure, through a mixture of medications."

**When you care for a sick or injured dog, your relationship with your vet may change.** You may grow closer or find yourself realizing your values are different. It's not unusual for owners to change veterinarians following an intense experience. And it's not unusual to find clients growing even closer to their veterinarians afterward.

**Before you leave the vet's office:**

Even with a great veterinarian, you're on your own once you leave the office. Dog owners often feel dazed and scared – even panicked – on hearing the news: Arfie is dangerously ill. Take notes. Bring a friend who can be calm and rational. Consider taping the vet's instructions (with permission).

## Alternative Treatments for Dogs

Acupuncture : These days, most vets are open to alternatives – and some alternatives are now mainstream. Many vets have training in acupuncture and are aware of special diets.

Reiki: "Sick and dying animals benefit when medication, pain, depression, and anxiety, are reduced and when the side effects of necessary medications can be reduced to improve their quality of life." - <http://www.reiki4paws.com/>

"Maggie was under the care of an acupuncturist for her degenerative myelopathy, which is sort of like a canine version of multiple sclerosis. Weekly, the kind veterinary acupuncturist came to our home to give her her "treatment," as it's called. I was skeptical about acupuncture -- until I saw concrete results from her. Pre-acupuncture, she occasionally fell while walking. With acupuncture, she stopped falling. Toward the end of her life, she did occasionally fall, regardless.

"My husband and I made Maggie homemade food in her last year or two. According to information from the University of Florida Veterinary School brought to our attention by our regular veterinarian, pork seems to help that condition. I can't recall if that same research gave us our ultimate recipe -- pork, sweet potatoes and rice -- but I do recall making the batches for Maggie, and the acupuncturist deemed it a good food for her."

-- Sally Deneen, Freelance Journalist

## WORKSHEET: HOME FROM THE VET

Take this worksheet with you so you can make notes.

1. Do you have written or taped instructions for what you are supposed to do at home?
2. Do you have a supply of food and medicine to last until your next visit? It's especially important not to run out over a weekend.
3. Do you feel **completely** comfortable in carrying out the vet's instructions – giving pills or injections? Have you had a chance to practice before you leave? (If your vet or vet tech won't help, it may be time to change vets.)
4. Do you have instructions for:
  - ✓What to do if the dog gets dehydrated (and how to tell), vomits, gets diarrhea, starts bleeding, stops eating or tears off a bandage or plastic collar
  - ✓How to take the dog's temperature (and what to do if the dog spikes a fever)
  - ✓How to tell if your dog is experiencing side effects from medications (and what to do)
  - ✓What to do if you find yourself unable to carry out the vet's instructions for medication (going away, dog refuses, and more)
  - ✓What are signs to call the vet?
  - ✓Who will you call if the vet has gone on holiday?
  - ✓Will your vet's call partner have access to your dog's records, if Fido's condition is complicated?

## **Chapter 4. How much will you do? A guide to decisions.**

When you learn the diagnosis, stop and take some deep breaths. Unless there's an emergency, you have time to evaluate your options. Before making a substantial time, energy and financial commitment, stop and ask some questions.

### **Decisions come down to:**

#### **✓Space and Location**

Obviously if you're in a private single-family house with a dog door, you have more options than if you're in a 30<sup>th</sup> floor high-rise apartment in the middle of a large city.

You also have to consider how you will get your dog to the vet. A 10-pound teacup poodle won't present a challenge for most dog-owners. But try to get a 75-pound German shepherd across town to a vet, especially if you rely on taxicabs and buses in a large city, unless you have access to vets-on-wheels.

#### **✓Schedule**

Most dog-owners face constraints based on work schedules. If you're lucky, your employer has a policy for personal days and personal time off. You can just take time to stay home with the dog. But more often, you have to keep working. You have to plan meetings and write memos, even while you're agonizing about Woofie's health.

Even if you're self-employed, you're caught in an emotional bind. Customers and clients want your work and you'll need money to pay for your dog's care.

"We're retired and our kids are grown, so we are free to be there for our dog."

"I don't work, but I need sleep more than my husband. So he ends up doing night duty when the dog has a seizure. The next day he chugs coffee and comes home from work early to go right to bed."

### ✓Travel

When your dog is sick, the rest of your life comes to a halt. Part of your expense will include paying for sitters when you go out of town. Let's face it, even the most dedicated dog-owner will have business trips, invitations to attend weddings of close family members, and just a desperate need for a vacation.

"We can leave the dog with an excellent veterinary hospital, but he'd be alone at night. That's when he's likely to have a seizure."

"Last year, we went to Europe for our tenth anniversary. Standing at the base of the Eiffel Tower, he called the dog-sitter to check on Woofie."

## ✓Finances

In a perfect world, money would be no object, whether we're treating people or beloved companion animals.

But we have to be realistic. You may simply not have the funds for a surgery that costs thousands of dollars.

Or your value system may support logic like, "For what it would cost to keep the dog alive another six months, I could save ten animals who are currently at the shelter, needing treatment urgently."

From interviews with dog-owners, as well as my own experience, I believe outcomes are better if you set a financial limit (or decide there will be no limits) up front. If you need more information, ask questions – but make your decisions as early as possible in the process.

For example, the vet says this medication costs \$75 a month. You can handle the cost for a few months. But doing the math, you realize you'll be spending \$900 a year on this medication alone. It is important to decide if you can maintain this commitment. Otherwise your first \$75 will be a waste of money.

Once I had to decide whether to spend over a thousand dollars to save a cat's life. (Not a dog story – but the principle for me was similar.) The cat was really special, but I didn't want to pour money into a hole.

So I prowled around the Internet and also got a second opinion. The consensus: These operations have an 80% success rate. So we took a chance and the cat remains alive with me, nearly six years later.

But when Keesha became ill, the situation was very different. She had cataracts, profound hearing loss, and severe arthritis. Spending a thousand dollars might give her a few extra months, with an iffy quality of life. She was old and others could see her deteriorating, month by month.

### **Putting it all together...**

Let's put all these factors together for a big decision.

Example: The vet says you'll have to administer fluids every 2-3 days. Many people begin by being squeamish, but find they're able to administer fluids subcutaneously, i.e., under the skin. Can you learn to do this yourself?

But getting over your own squeamishness is just the beginning. When the dog gets fluids, she'll need to relieve herself – often and in large quantities. If you're in a house with a fenced yard, in a temperate climate, you can probably let the dog find her way outside. You may even have a doggy door. Maybe she can spend whole days outside, with a doghouse available for shade and shelter.

But suppose you live in a small apartment on the tenth floor of a high-rise. Will you be able to get the dog to the street in time? Can you consider diapers, "piddle pads," and maybe doggie litter boxes? Some dogs – and their owners -- do well with these options. Some do not. It is important to be honest with yourself and your vet.

In my own case, I decided that I could not give fluids to my beloved dog, Keesha. She was old, with cataracts and hearing loss as well as arthritis. I had just moved to an apartment in a large city. My own vet acknowledged that all her clients who administered fluids had access to fenced yards and doggie doors.

As it happened, we never got to that stage.

But I learned it was important to set limits on what I would and would not do. Your decision will be a very personal one. Veterinarian Lisa Goldstein writes, "What is too much for one person may be just the tip of the iceberg for someone else."

Here's a "tip of the iceberg" example:

"My husband and I have an eight-year-old epileptic Labrador Retriever. For the past six years, we have tried everything to control this disorder--natural diets (raw chicken and vegetables), supplements (fish oils, flax seed oil, milk thistle), and prescription drugs.

"We are reconciled to the fact that Timber will have breakthrough seizures roughly every two weeks for the rest of his life (which the vet says will be shortened because of his medications).

"So every couple of weeks, we lose at least one night of sleep--sitting with him during the seizure, ensuring he doesn't hurt himself or anything else in the post-ictal phase, walking or swimming with him afterwards to exhaust him during his I'm-vulnerable-and-could-be-eaten-by-something phase.

"He takes his medication at 7 am and 7 pm. Since he is very sensitive to the timing of his medication, we must carefully assess everything we do in the evenings. Will we pill him before we go out to dinner, even though it's a little early? Does he appear to be stable enough to wait until we get home?

"Timber was bred to be a hunting dog. Had a hunter adopted Timber, the first seizure would have signaled the end of Timber's life. And that would have been wrong for a dog who is always wagging his tail, because he loves his life... When I drag myself out of bed in the morning, Timber is always lying on the floor at the foot of the bed waiting for me. Then his tail starts thumping the floor in anticipation of another day. You gotta love that."

## **WORKSHEET: A responsible, compassionate decision**

### **Ask Your Vet:**

- What treatments are recommended, both complementary and mainstream?
- What is the cost of these treatments – in time, energy and money?
- What is the likely outcome of each treatment: extending your dog's life, adding to the quality of your dog's life, giving the dog more time?
- What are the odds of success of each treatment?

**Space:** Are your living quarters set up for long-term dog home health care? If not, can you make adjustments?

**Schedule:** How much "give" do you have in your schedule? What will happen if you lose a few nights of sleep?

**Travel:** What are your plans for travel during the next three to six months? Will your dog still need care? How will you arrange for a substitute?

**Finances:** How will your ability to earn income be affected by your care giving decision? Are you comfortable with the impact on your savings account?

**Most Important:** Are you making your own decision or do you feel you're following someone else's agenda? Even your vet should defer to your own needs and wishes.

## **Chapter 5. Home from the Hospital**

Most dog illnesses or injuries begin with a stay in the hospital or a long visit at the vet's office. Nobody likes being in a hospital – and your dog is no exception. Being in familiar surroundings will ease stress. And the dog will be more optimistic: "Back to my old self soon!"

### **Stress**

My dog had a laid-back temperament, but some dogs experience stress associated with a hospital stay. Occasionally they become shy and don't like to be touched. A very rare few will snap or even bite. You can reassure the dog by talking softly, giving him lots of reassurance and getting back to familiar routines.

### **Food**

Sick dogs may have to be tempted with special tasty food – canned food or even cat food. Some dogs refuse to eat from their dishes but respond to hand feeding.

Some owners suggest adding a little spice, like garlic powder – after checking with the vet, of course. Don't keep serving food the dog rejects: put down fresh food later. And always keep fresh water available.

Special diets create a challenge. Sick dogs often resist a change of diet just when it's most needed. You can try mixing old with new food (if the vet allows) and hand-feeding.

### **Beds**

Sick dogs appreciate a thick, soft bed. To protect the floors, you can put down a layer of old shower curtains, then a foam pad, then the dog's bed. If the dog is discharging any

kind of fluid, you can create a bed of foam pads, newspapers and old towels, which can be discarded easily. Old pillows work too.

Keep the bed away from other pets, drafts and human traffic patterns. A dog who likes his bed will spend time there, resting, which is just what he should be doing.

I was lucky: Keesha loved her dog beds – she had always had one in each room. So she naturally chose her familiar sleeping places.

### **Watch for bed sores**

Dogs who lie on a hard surface, and dogs who can't turn themselves, can get bed sores. As her body presses against the floor, the blood supply to the tissues will cut off. The smaller vessels clot and a red patch appears on the dog's skin. Left untreated, the patch develops into a painful sore that will need treatment.

If the dog can't move or turn, ask your vet about turning him over to avoid bedsores. And if you see a bedsore, call your vet at once.

Keep the dog bed warm. Use a hot water bottle, wrapped very carefully in a thick towel. You can use a heating pad (but be careful – follow directions – as some people claim heating pads can cause fires). Some pets sleep on a heating pad round the clock, but I would never leave an animal alone with a heating pad.

### **Keep the dog quiet but not isolated**

If you have children, set up visiting hours so the dog won't get too tired. Ask your vet about waking up the dog for medication and "bathroom" trips outside. Some dogs benefit from stimulation; others need their rest.

Dog trainer Christopher Aust warns, "Don't isolate the dog." As we discussed, the dog's mental state is important. In the wild, the pack will abandon or even kill a sick dog. So your dog needs to understand that you won't abandon her.

When Fido hides under the bed or under the porch, he's following pack mentality. He doesn't want to be left alone. He's just afraid of being attacked by his own pack.

### **Becoming your dog's private duty nurse**

Ask your vet how to groom your dog. You'll need to wash discharges from her eyes and nose. You may need to trim fur that's been soiled. Some owners recommend using vaseline to soothe irritated tissues.

Some owners discover how to lift a dog with a sling: a towel or cloth passed under the dog's tummy, supporting the back legs. Practice! My own dog, Keesha, resisted fiercely.

Several online sources (see end of ebook for a list) recommend keeping a journal so you can tell your vet just what your dog was doing, day by day. You will also be able to track your dog's progress realistically. How often did he ask to go out? Was she motivated to walk? What (and how much) did he eat? How often does an arthritic dog have good days and bad days?

A journal also helps you uncover side effects of dog medications, which are similar to what's found among humans: weight gain or loss, depression, digestive upsets, and loss of balance. Any unusual behavior may be a symptom of side effects or a new illness.

## **Becoming your dog's physical therapist**

"Many people are intimidated by the physical therapy required after a dog has hip surgery or loses a leg," says Penny J. Leish of Reiki4Paws. "Most understand the problems we face, whether it be cost, distance, or time. My dog Red had FHO hip surgery, where the vet removes painful bone spurs and rebuilds the area. We performed the passive manipulation exercises our vet taught us and consulted a canine rehab therapist. As a result, the dog healed quickly and with relatively little pain.

"As the dog aged and could no longer get around well, the same therapist taught me to do swim therapy at home during the warm months of the year. During the winter, we used his heated pool once every week or two.

"I encourage dog owners to ask everyone for help – therapist, vet, everyone. Red lived better and longer because we asked for help. The help we received allowed us to provide exercise that kept him healthier and offered much pain relief in the last couple of years of his life."

Penny J. Leisch  
[www.Reiki4Paws.com](http://www.Reiki4Paws.com)

## **WORKSHEET: Canine home health care checklist**

√Food:

Ask the vet

- How often and how much
- Tips to encourage the dog's appetite
- Permissible substitutions (sick dogs often like canned food and cat food)

√Soft warm dog beds (adapted as necessary for incontinent dogs or dogs with discharges)

√Medication

- Schedule: If your work schedule makes it hard to administer medication 3 or 4 times a day, ask about twice-a-day options. Some vets can the adapt medication to fit your schedule.
- How to give pills, liquids or shots
- Enough for weekends and holidays

√Journal

- Daily activities of your dog
- Changes in the dog's behavior
- Eating, drinking and walking routines

## **Chapter 6. Getting down to your dog's business.**

The most difficult part of caring for your sick dog: access to "bathroom breaks." Some experts believe dogs actually experience mental anguish if they can't go outside to "do their business."

But some owners found that their dogs learned to adapt. One owner kept her dog in a corner of the house, cleaning up around the dog, for three months. Others say that a dog who can't get out on its own is at the end of its life.

Several dog owners have suggestions for an incontinent dog:

- Put newspaper under her rear end to keep her bed dry
- Sponge her rear parts with water every day
- Dust the rear end with talcum powder

At the end of this ebook, we provide a list of products you can buy to help your dog: diapers, "piddle pads" and more. These solutions work well for some dogs and dog owners, but not others.

**"Piddle pads"** are large cottony squares with a plastic backing. You put them on the bathroom floor and train the dogs to use them as a sort of litterbox. "Messy in a small bathroom," says one owner. "An easy solution," says another.

**Newspapers** offer a cheaper solution. Some owners report success, especially with small dogs.

**Diapers** strap around the dog's rear end. Instead of commercial designed-for-dogs products, owners usually go to the drugstore and buy feminine hygiene pads.

Some dogs tolerate diapers well. Others do not. Check the “product reviews” posted on amazon.com and other pet supply sources. I’ve seen postings like, “Fifi chewed the diaper off in thirty minutes.”

**Slings:** You may be able to help your dog go outside with commercial “slings” that you run under the dog’s belly. Some are like miniature hammocks, padded with sheepskin. You can also make impromptu slings with towels, blankets and any appropriate-size cloth.

You use the sling to hold up the dog’s hind legs so he can go outside. But once again: success depends on the dog. A large, feisty dog will be a challenge!

**Outside pit stop:** Some owners set up an area just outside the back door. You can build sort of like a mini sand pit and fill it with wood chips.

**Patio walk area:** Apartment dwellers can purchase a kit to set up a doggie walk area, complete with wall and grass! Or obviously you can create your own.

### **The bottom (!) line on dog business:**

Respect your own tolerance levels. One dog owner says, “So you get a few stains on the rug – big deal!”

But you may be living in a rented home. You may have family members who do not relate to your dog in the same way.

On the other hand, you may be in a position to go all out for your dog. If so, you have to decide: What is in the dog’s best interest? Some experts believe, “If the dog can’t get up and walk outside to take care of its business, that dog is ready to end its life.” Others disagree.

Here's one heart-warming story. Their decision wouldn't work for everyone but Herkamur sounds like a great dog.

"My boyfriend adopted Herkamur nearly fifteen years ago. I wasn't a dog person until I met Herkamur. But he is so special that I fell in love with him.

"Last winter he was diagnosed with a fast-growing inoperable colon cancer. He's outlived everyone's predictions, although it's been a challenge. We have to wipe his rear end and we've gone through gallons of Oxy-Clean. Finally we decided to try doggy diapers – a soft flannel black holder around his middle, with super maxi-pads. My boyfriend didn't want anything too "girly" for his Herkamur!

"I've learned that immediate euthanasia isn't always the right choice. Despite many frustrations, we've enjoyed a lot of good times with Herkamur in the last 9 months. He doesn't seem to be in any pain, just a little uncomfortable. We've learned to not expect perfect behavior anymore and that's okay. The tumor is now so large that he can't sit and has trouble lying down. But the adoring look in his eyes makes all the difficulties worth it.

"So, I would advise others to try and grit their teeth as much as they can and arm themselves with a good stock of cleaning products. Ultimately the challenges day-to-day hygiene care are not what you'll remember about your sick dog. It'll be the smiles and big loving eyes and happy times."

## **Chapter 7. How much is too much?**

Every dog owner I interviewed said, "The toughest decision was, 'How much is too much?' And everyone came up with different guidelines. One family wrote, "When our dog couldn't walk, the vet said he was still alive as long as he was eating." But others say, "If the dog can't walk outside alone, it's time to sop."

Veterinarian Lisa Goldstein: "Dogs were meant to walk, run, eat, drink, and interact with their humans. There's got to be a point where you say this dog's quality of life is not what they want."

Another dog owner told trainer Christopher Aust, "Our dog used to love to swim in the pool. When he was sitting by the side, looking wistfully at the water, we knew it was time."

### **Is there a doggie equivalent of hospice?**

Veterinarian Lisa Goldstein: "I think hospice care, for an animal, would be giving subcutaneous fluids, offering soft, palatable foods, helping the animal outside to urinate (i.e., "slinging" older dogs that may have arthritis)."

If you have qualms about ending your dog's life, visit  
The Nikki Hospice Foundation for pets  
<http://www.pethospice.org>

Veterinarians who are members of AVMA may be able to download guidelines for providing hospice care. The idea is to give you quality time with your dog and allow both you and the dog to say good-bye.

Most dog owners stop questioning. They just know. Sometimes they reach the point only after a dog has shown severe pain or stops eating. Others realize they are no longer able to care for the dog, given their own life situation. Most vets believe people rarely make bad decisions.

“If pain isn’t managed, then it is cruel and unusual to keep an animal alive. Unfortunately, animals rarely curl up and die. We have to step in for them. I don’t think animals should sit in a hospital hooked up to IV lines with no chance of recovery. If your dog is that sick, then I think he should be taken home and put to sleep, or he may need to be euthanized in the hospital. Once an animal cannot eat or drink, there is no alternative.” – Lisa Goldstein, DVM

“When I finally decided to let Sandy go, it was because the vet was pretty clear there was little in the way of treatment that could be done for him, and, chances were, he would have a poor quality of life. He had had a full and active life and had already been showing signs that inactivity was affecting him...

“For an animal who had served so faithfully, I felt it would have been an injustice to keep him around simply because I didn't want to let go.” -- Christopher Aust

## **QUESTIONS OTHERS HAVE ASKED TO MAKE A TOUGH DECISION**

There are no “right” answers – just helpful questions – from a number of sources.

- Why is the dog here?
- Does she want to be here or do you need her?
- Does she still enjoy being alive – playing, giving affection?
- Are there more good times than bad times?
- Is there a reasonable chance for a cure?
- How much additional time might treatment give? What will the quality of the time be?
- Do you have the financial and emotional resources to handle long-term medical care if it is required?
- Do you have the necessary physical and emotional stamina to attend to the dog? Think of giving up sleep, giving meds, being on-call 24/7.
- Do you find your relationship with your dog changing as you anticipate a loss?

Rita Reynolds, author of *Blessing the Bridge*, has cared for many sick and dying animals. She writes (p. 25):

“Many lessons on euthanasia have come my way, judging by the number of times I’ve had to make the final call. With some animals I’ve struggled through and to this day still hold regrets, while with others I feel totally at peace. Pain and confusion are a part of the process no matter what.”

Reynolds offers three suggestions to help with this tough decision.

First, she says, “I tell the dying creature that it is okay to die...and do not stay around for me.” And you have to be sincere. Animals, Reynolds claims, pick up thoughts, not words.

Second, she asks the animal a form of, “What do you want me to do?”

And finally she takes a few deep breaths and waits for the animal’s response.

## **Chapter 8. The old-timer dog**

“Old” doesn’t mean sick. Dog owners can make the mistake of assuming a dog’s symptoms are just due to aging when in fact the dog has a curable condition. Or, conversely, they assume something is wrong when the dog shows symptoms of slowing down, “normal” for everyone.

And people vary in their decision to invest in care for an older dog. At one extreme, you’ll hear, “He’s old and he’s had a good life. We don’t want to do more. But others say, “She’s a great dog and we want to give her as much time as possible.”

Veterinarian Lisa Goldstein says, “Old is a relevant term. My lab mix is 13 years old. She walks two miles everyday, is in perfect health and looks better than most dogs five years younger. If she needs surgery, she’ll be an excellent candidate.

“On the other hand you could have a ten year old dog with debilitating arthritis, early stages of kidney disease and cataracts. This dog might not be as good a candidate for a surgery. Bottom line, the owner is the caretaker.”

### **How old is “old?”**

You may have heard the saying, “One dog year is equivalent to 7 human years.” These days, we’re learning that a dog’s age relates to size and weight. A graying muzzle isn't necessarily a sign of being senior. Some dogs become prematurely gray, just like some people. Giant breeds usually become senior around age 5, large breeds around age 6, and medium and small breeds around age 7.

Most reports list the average dog lifespan as 12 years. But averages can be deceptive. Smaller dogs and male dogs live

longer than larger dogs and female dogs. But there are wide variances for breed. And if your dog is a mix, you may not know which breed characteristics will dominate.

Many dog owners go into denial about their dog's age (and their own). I certainly did. It was hard for me to believe that Keesha no longer wanted to run and play. I couldn't believe she was deaf, even when she slept through the arrival of the UPS driver. In her younger days, she'd bark nonstop just hearing the truck go by.

My friend Bill says his vet orders a "senior screen" on his dog every 6 months to a year: a full range of blood and urine tests. After my experience with Keesha, I'd agree. Some vets recommend annual teeth cleaning, when dogs get blood tests to test for anesthesia readiness. But now I would ask for tests at the first warning sign.

In an article "Canine Brainpower," Joan Hustace Walker emphasizes the need for keeping an older dog active, even if she isn't capable of doing what she used to. But mental stimulation adds quantity as well as quality of life, especially in older dogs.

[http://www.dogchannel.com/dog/care/senior/article\\_22409.aspx](http://www.dogchannel.com/dog/care/senior/article_22409.aspx)

Older dogs can have weaker immune systems, which means they're more likely to pick up illnesses. And their symptoms are not always obvious.

After my own experiences, I would also get blood tests for an older dog just before a major geographical move. A move can put stress on an older dog and you don't want to search desperately for a vet in a new city.

For more guidance on senior dogs, see:  
<http://www.puplife.com/dogcaretips/seniordoghealth.html>

## Chapter 9. Saying good-bye

Eventually, no matter what you do, it's time to say good-bye. For most of us, that means making a final appointment at the vet. Be sure the veterinary staff knows why you are coming. Make sure they have time. Some vets suggest asking for the last appointment of the day. If you come in a car, ask if you can wait in the car – not the waiting room.

“Our vet in New Mexico was truly compassionate. We drove up to her office and parked under a shady tree. She came out to our car and gave Poncho a shot, while we held him. After he was asleep, she arranged to carry him inside. Poncho’s last memory was being held by loving hands in a familiar place.”  
-- Terri Matson [www.cactusweb.net](http://www.cactusweb.net)

Make sure you have someone available to drive you home. (I was able to walk and take a bus. I could never have driven myself even a few blocks.) Don't try to navigate on your own afterward.

Don't apologize for sadness. Your veterinarian's staff will probably cry along with you. You can get a clear idea at what to expect at these websites:

<http://web.vet.cornell.edu/public/petloss/saeuth.htm>

<http://www.thepetcenter.com/imtop/euthanasia.htm>

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?cls=0&cat=1494&articleid=633>

And you'll find many resources to deal with grief at the end of this ebook. Start with this website:

<http://www.pet-loss.net/>

## **Suggestions for dealing with your loss**

Source: <http://tailsawagginonline.com/euthanasia.html>

- ❖ Take a day off from work. If you need a reason, tell the truth: say your best friend died.
- ❖ Write a eulogy describing how much your dog meant to you.  
  
I posted mine on my blog. See <http://www.yourdogshhealth.blogspot.com>
- ❖ Compose a poem or write a song about your dog.
- ❖ Compile a scrapbook or photo album. This will help keep the memory of your dog alive.
- ❖ Display a picture of your dog and burn a votive candle beside it. Keep the candle lit during the most intense mourning.
- ❖ Notify friends who will understand and be supportive.
- ❖ Make a donation to a charitable organization in memory of your dog.
- ❖ Observe Pet Memorial Day on the second Sunday in September.

## **Chapter 10. Honoring a great dog**

Don't be surprised if you feel mixed emotions after you say good-bye to your dog at the very end. Whether caring for humans or dogs, you've experienced stress, and there's usually a mix of sadness and relief at the same time.

Will you honor your dog's memory with another dog? Or will you wait – maybe forever?

### **When to Get Another Dog**

There's no pattern and no right or wrong decision.

"Some people get another dog right away. If they don't, they seem to wait a year or more," observed one experienced dog owner.

David: " I've owned up to three dogs at a time. If I'm down to just one dog, and the dog dies, then I get another one right away. And I always get adult golden retrievers from the local rescue organization or shelter."

An article by Holly Nash, DVM, cautions that getting another dog right away can send mixed signals to a child. Your child might conclude she is replaceable too. Other owners point out that children need to learn, "Dogs aren't objects. You don't just replace them when they wear out."

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?cls=0&cat=1494&articleid=635>

### **Dealing with Your Other Dog's Grief**

Other dog owners say they feel they must get a second dog, because dogs grieve for one another. A dog will show grief by barking a lot more (or becoming silent), sleeping in his old friend's bed, and sometimes even going to the door,

sadly waiting for his old friend to come home.

While dog grief (like human grief) eases with time, dog owners report that a new dog can help. Playing with a new friend can cheer up a grieving dog. A summary of tips can be found at

<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&A=1400&S=1&SourceID=47>

But every dog is individual. While some dogs perk up with an outing in the park, one owner wrote, "She just wasn't interested."

Christopher Aust: "If you find yourself comparing every dog to the dog who just died, choose a different breed. That way you'll be starting over.

"I also wouldn't go out and try to find a carbon copy of a dog that has passed. My own dog Sandy died several years ago. If I ever went out to get a new German Shepard, I would never try to find another Sandy. There was only ONE Sandy. He was a unique dog and that is that. All I can do is raise any dog I have to be a good dog, and if he ends up like Sandy, well that's great. If I am looking for his 'twin' I'm likely to be disappointed."

Sam: "When my dog died at age 16, I swore I'd never get another dog. But I did. And I fell in love with the new dog and that gave me perspective and helped me recover from my loss."

## **Chapter 11. Caring for the Caregiver**

Human caregivers – men and women caring for sick and disabled and aging family members – face stress every day. When you're caring for a sick dog, you face many of the same challenges.

Let's face it: Giving care takes time and energy. Your sleep can be interrupted. You lose out on social opportunities and turn down invitations to have fun.

Chances are you are struggling to balance dog care with other responsibilities, such as a full-time job, volunteer work. If you cared for a human, you'd have some understanding from coworkers and friends. But if you're caring for a dog, you may not get days off from work and formal release from obligations.

As with human caregiving, constant stress can lead to burnout, stress, frustration and even health problems. You can expect to feel anger, guilt, depression and the whole range of emotions.

Some tips:

### **1. Plan breaks and getaways whenever possible.**

If your dog needs 24-hour care, you may be challenged to find substitutes if you have to leave town. But breaks are necessary for your own mental and physical health.

### **2. Schedule "respite care."**

Human caregivers find substitutes periodically to give them a "respite" or break from the ongoing stress. If the dog is well enough, schedule doggie day care and overnight boarding every so often, so you can have the canine

equivalent. Good boarding kennels will give your dog medication and a warm place to sleep – and that may be all he needs or wants right now. You can feel guilty about leaving her in a cage overnight, but you'll be able to hold out longer and give your dog more quality care.

### **3. Hire a “dog coach.”**

It would never have occurred to me to hire a “coach” to help me deal with my own dog Keesha’s illness. But as it happened, I met Christopher Aust on ryze.com, an Internet-based networking group. He seemed kind as well as knowledgeable – and he is a warm presence on the other end of the phone. Christopher has been training dogs since he was twelve. He served in the US Air Force K-9 Corps as an MP. He trained police dogs in Arizona and has entered dogs in obedience competition. Name any breed, and Christopher can describe the pros and cons of owning one.

Like most people, I thought a trainer just taught sit, stay and down. But great trainers can help you understand the dog’s signals. You’ll communicate with the dog and understand when he’s in pain or she’s ready for more exercise.

Most important, trainers are like coaches for people. The good ones are non-judgmental and objective. When my friends were besieging me with useless advice, Christopher helped me give me perspective.

The veterinarian was great, but she didn’t have time to answer a lot of questions about the psychological side of caring for a sick dog. Most trainers charge reasonable fees and many offer telephone consultation.

When choosing a guide:

Ask about qualifications. Anyone can call himself a dog trainer. Choose a resource who has been through formal programs, such as a K-9 Corps police unit.

Choose a non-judgmental resource who makes you feel comfortable. You're dealing with enough guilt and stress.

A final thought

From <http://www.master-dog-training.com>

A veterinarian prepared to euthanize an old dog, following a long illness. The parents thought their four-year-old son, Shane, would learn by being there, too.

To everyone's surprise, Shane seemed surprisingly calm. Did he know what was going on? Everyone sat together for awhile, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives.

Shane piped up, "I know why." Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation.

He said, "People are born so that they can learn how to live a good life -- like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?" The four-year-old continued, "Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long."

## RESOURCES

Hundreds of mailing lists exist to help dog owners: general, breed-specific and topic-specific. There's even a list for owners of canine mailing lists!

<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/dogs-faq/email-lists/>

## VETERINARY LISTS

"The VETMED list is a moderated forum for the discussion of issues related to veterinary medicine. You do not have to be a veterinarian to participate - in fact, most subscribers to this list are not veterinarians. Discussions of a technical nature - such as among veterinarians are welcome, as well as discussions of veterinary-related topics among animal owners and other interested people."

To: [listserv@listserv.iupui.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.iupui.edu)

Subject: subscribe VETMED your-name

VETPLUS-L is limited to clinicians involved in veterinary and human medical practice or professionals working in medical research and teaching. To join this list, send email to [jeffp@vetmed.wsu.edu](mailto:jeffp@vetmed.wsu.edu) or [alb2@cornell.edu](mailto:alb2@cornell.edu) asking for VETPLUS-L's charter. You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire before being allowed to join.

## DOG HEALTH LIST

This list helps dog owners deal specifically with health questions. Post your query and you'll get responses (mostly helpful, experience-based and subjective) from other dog owners. You'll get warnings about side effects of drugs and recalls of medications and dog food.

<mailto:doghealth2-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>

## **BREED-SPECIFIC LISTS**

Nearly every breed has a dedicated list where owners exchange tips and mutual admiration. A great source if you're considering adopting a new dog, but also a way to learn how others who own your favorite breed face unique challenges.

Example:

Corgis: To join a list, send an email to  
[listserv@listserv.tamu.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.tamu.edu)

Leave the subject line blank and in the message field, type

SUB Corgi-L cathy goodwin

Obviously, you'd change "cathy goodwin" to your own name. I recommend using your own name if at all possible. These groups get quite intense!

Border Collies:

<http://www.bordercollie.org/lists.html>

Cocker spaniels:

<http://members.tripod.com/~magimae/signup.html>

For any breed, type "breed name + mailing list" into any major search engine. For example you could try "cocker spaniel mailing list" or "german shepherd mailing list."

## WEB SITES

**Caution:** A website cannot be a replacement for your own qualified, licensed veterinarian.

Nearly all veterinary schools have websites with information for lay people as well as veterinarians.

For example:

Cornell University

<http://bakerinstitute.vet.cornell.edu/index.html>

Washington State University vet school

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/pets/Christopher> Aust of

Master Dog Training

Christopher Aust gave me a lot of tips for this Report. He spent many years running K-9 police and military training programs and he's also shown dogs in obedience.

<http://www.master-dog-training.com>

Tellington touch

<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/ttouch.html>

Is your dog really sick?

<http://www.sonic.net/~cdlcruz/GPCC/library/sickdog.htm>

and

<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/signs.html>

Is this an emergency?

<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/emerlist.html>

This site includes all sorts of information about adverse reactions to medication reported by dog owners. They post links from legal sources and the press. However, they caution you to use the site at your own risk, and that's good advice.

<http://www.dogsadversereactions.com>

Q&A from Rainbow Bridge

[http://www.rainbowbridge.com/New\\_Beginnings/Your\\_Pets\\_health/Your\\_Pets\\_Health.aspx](http://www.rainbowbridge.com/New_Beginnings/Your_Pets_health/Your_Pets_Health.aspx)

<http://www.discountpetmedicines.com/cat-dog-pill-accessories.htm>

This site was written for cairn terriers, but offers tips that apply to all sick dogs.

<http://www.cairnrescue.com/docs/AfterTreatmentCare.htm>

## **Pet Loss Online Resources**

Even the most logical, serious dog owners find themselves surprisingly comforted by the Rainbow Bridge poem.

<http://www.petloss.com/poems/maingrp/rainbowb.htm>

<http://www-hsc.usc.edu/~rneville/tbell.html>

Comprehensive sites:

<http://www.aplb.org/>

<http://www.petloss.com/>

<http://www-hsc.usc.edu/~rneville/loss.html>

You can even light a virtual candle for your sick or injured dog on the "special needs" list:

<http://www.petloss.com/needs/fneedlst.htm>

Vet School Hotlines for Pet Loss

Tufts University (Boston)

<http://www.tufts.edu/vet/petloss/resources.html>

University of California, Davis  
<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/petloss/>

Pet loss hotline:  
<http://web.vet.cornell.edu/public/petloss/>

### **Explaining Pet Loss to Children**

<http://www.petplace.com/article.aspx?id=3199>

Pet Loss Pages for Children  
<http://www.animaland.org/asp/realissues/petloss.asp>  
<http://www.kidsturncentral.com/topics/animals/petloss.htm>

### **General Information**

Comprehensive site with lots of information  
<http://www.allaboutpets.org.uk/assets/pdfs/dog/dog11.pdf>

Choosing a vet: by a non-trainer, non-vet, whose observations seem very sensible  
[http://www.macatawa.org/~wilcox\\_k/vets.html](http://www.macatawa.org/~wilcox_k/vets.html)

This is a great site with comments by a veterinarian  
[www.vetinfo4dogs.com](http://www.vetinfo4dogs.com)

<http://netscape.petplace.com/dog-medical-library.aspx>  
[dog medical dictionary](#)

<http://netscape.petplace.com/Articles/artShow.asp?artID=5159>

An amazingly complete document, including directions for giving dogs medicine and taking pulse and temperature.  
<http://www.cairnrescue.com/docs/AfterTreatmentCare.htm>

A directory of wholistic health for herbs and homeopathy  
<http://www.shirleys-wellness-cafe.com/ahealth.htm>

Diabetic dogs  
<http://www.petdiabetes.org/>

Dog emergencies:  
<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/emergency.html>

Signs of illness:  
<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/signs.html>  
Designed for dachshunds but helpful for all dogs:  
Dachshund Orthopedic Disc Group Email Resource  
(DODGER):  
<http://www.dodgerslist.com/tiparchives.html>  
Living with a deaf dog by Susan Cope Becker  
*2555 Newtown Road, Cincinnati, OH 45244.*  
<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/deaf1.html>

About.com sites always are packed with information.  
Here's an article about dealing with a sick dog when you  
can't afford a vet:  
<http://vetmedicine.about.com/cs/diseasesall/a/sickpetmoney.htm>

Cooking natural food for your dog  
<http://www.thelittlefoxes.net/>

Food questions answered by a vet  
<http://www.onlynaturalpet.com>

A great resource for disabled pets, including information  
about special products

<http://handicappedpets.com/>  
and a good selection of books at  
<http://handicappedpets.com/books/>

Giving a dog medication:

<http://www.master-dog-training.com/archive/080505.htm>

City dogs: This site targets NYC owners but has tips for anyone living in a large city with a dog. Sponsored by a veterinarian with tips for dog health.

<http://www.urbanhound.com/>

Dog bites: Sick and injured dogs can bite. This website focuses on preventing dog bites, which can seal a dog's fate forever.

<http://www.doggonesafe.com/>

Websites focusing on dog health

[http://www.seefido.com/html/a\\_sick\\_dog.htm](http://www.seefido.com/html/a_sick_dog.htm)

<http://www.petplace.com/>

[http://www.peteducation.com/category\\_summary.cfm?cls=0&cat=1762](http://www.peteducation.com/category_summary.cfm?cls=0&cat=1762)

Specific questions answered by a vet

<http://www.vetinfo.com/dilldog.html>

Comprehensive guide from a vet at a sanctuary:

<http://www.2ndchance.info/ACC.htm>

Behavior

<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=SRC&S=1&SourceID=60>

How to take a dog's pulse

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?cls=0&cat=1762&articleid=1077>

Chronic deafness in dogs

<http://www.lsu.edu/deafness/aid.htm>

Dog cancer

<http://vetmedicine.about.com/cs/dogdiseasesc/a/dogcancer.htm>

Monthly newsletters

<http://www.tufts.edu/vet/publications/yourdog/index.html>  
\$20/year

From a veterinarian

<http://www.softpaws.net/subscribe.asp>

From a holistic veterinarian (comes out occasionally)

<http://www.drasko.com/newsletter.htm>

Natural pet care

<http://www.crvetcenter.com/newsletter.htm>

Paws-up: For owners, trainers and handlers of therapy and aid dogs

<http://www.paws-up.net/newsletter.html>

Burlington Veterinary Hospital:

<http://www.burlingtonvet.com/news.html>

UC Davis

<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/CCAH/Update.html>

U of Wisconsin – Madison

<http://www2.vetmed.wisc.edu/oncall/story.php?id=117>

Pet loss support by state

[http://www.paws2heaven.com/Support\\_directory.htm](http://www.paws2heaven.com/Support_directory.htm)

## **Private newsletters**

Canine Medicine Chest – holistic products

<http://www.petmedicinechest.com/canine/Default.asp>

Chas Pfizer Pharmaceuticals

<http://www.pfizerah.com/newsletters.asp?country=US&lang=EN&drug=PU&species=CN>

The Dog Advisor

<http://www.dog-advisor.com/>

Newsletter for special needs dogs

<http://www.myspecialdog.com/>

List of Dog Ezines: From Cairns to Collies

<http://www.webscoutlists.com/listing/1395>

## **Books**

### **For Every Dog an Angel: The Forever Dog**

This is Super Dog's number one most popular pet loss book. Click on this book to read more than 10 glowing reviews.

From Amazon.com: *For Every Dog An Angel is a light, magical little book that honors the timeless connection between people and their canine companions. Written from the heart after the unexpected loss of her "forever dog" Martha, this charming book will bring comfort to anyone who has ever had to say goodbye to their best four-legged friend.*

Disabled dogs

All sorts of resources, including physical therapy for dogs

<http://www.doggon.com/links.html>

<http://www.handicappedpets.com/>

A wonderful resource for handicapped pets

Carts for disabled dogs and support for dogs with degenerative myelopathy. A progressive neurological disease for which there is no known cure, carts serve to preserve mobility by keeping dogs active for as long as possible.

[www.Dodgerslist.com](http://www.Dodgerslist.com)

Dachshund Orthopedic Disc Group Email Resource  
Includes emergency resources for dachshunds with back problems

[www.geocities.com/doggie\\_essentials/and\\_more  
Incontinence products for paralyzed pets.](http://www.geocities.com/doggie_essentials/and_more_Incontinence_products_for_paralyzed_pets.)

[www.Spanna.net](http://www.Spanna.net)

**Very informative site for pets with DM**

[www.Handicappedpets.com](http://www.Handicappedpets.com)

Invaluable resource for all of your pet's needs.

[www.ACVS.org](http://www.ACVS.org) **Official website of Board Certified  
Veterinary Surgeons. Find one in your area!**

**Other products**

Booties for dogs: cover bandages and protect injured paws.

<http://www.petboots.com/>

Rainbow Bridge Sites

[http://www.petloss.com/poems/maingrp/rainbowb.  
htm](http://www.petloss.com/poems/maingrp/rainbowb.htm)

<http://www.petloss.com/poems/poems.htm>

Dedicated To Keesha, a beautiful, gentle, loving chow mix from the Broward County Humane Society. She taught me everything I know about dogs and a lot of what I know about life. She loved dog parks and I like to think of her running at top speed through the Great Dog Park in the Sky.  
<http://www.dog-health.blogspot.html>

Keesha and me in Gainesville, FL, Spring 2001.

