

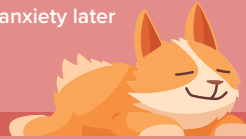
# Life Stages Of A Dog

Dogs, with their playful escapades and natural curiosity, go through distinct life stages. Knowing when these phases transition from one to another is based on the pet's age, size, and breed. Understanding these different stages allows for the opportunity to provide tailored care and strengthen the human-animal bond.<sup>1</sup>

## STAGE 1: Puppy

**(6 weeks to 12 months of age) – Puppies begin weaning off their mother's milk and exploring their surroundings.**

- Frequent healthy development examinations
- Initial vaccination series
- Intestinal parasite check and preventative deworming
- Heartworm and flea prevention for all patients
- High-quality growth diet for proper development
- Positive contact with other people and pets (critical for proper socialization) should be done after initial vaccinations
- Elective reproductive surgeries (spay or neuter) for pets not intended as breeding stock or show animals
- Begin grooming your pet to reduce anxiety later
- Introduce home dental care



## STAGE 2: Young Adult

**(12-18 months) – Dogs' hormones start to play a role and their physical and mental attitude begins to change.**

- Annual physical exam
- Regular exercise to promote good body conditioning
- Heartworm & tick-disease prevention and routine check-ups
- Positive reinforcement training to encourage desirable behavior and habits
- Elective reproductive surgeries (spay or neuter) for pets not intended as breeding stock or show animals
- Regular home dental care
- Regular grooming to maintain your pet's coat at it's current stage



## STAGE 3: Mature Adult

**(2-7 years) – Dogs are fully developed and personality and behavior are generally more predictable.**

- Bi-annual physical exam
- Regular grooming to maintain a healthy coat
- Regular exercise to promote good body conditioning
- Heartworm prevention, routine check-ups, and booster vaccinations
- Screening for common conditions in aging pets
- Good quality maintenance diet to help avoid health risks
- Regular home dental care
- Professional dental care as needed



## STAGE 4: Senior Adult

**(Over 6-8 years) – Dog's energy levels begin to slow down, and veterinary checkups become even more important.**

- Bi-annual physical exam
- Vaccinations up to date
- Heartworm & tick-disease prevention and routine check-ups
- Screening for common conditions in the older pet
- Gradual adjustment to diet appropriate for senior animals
- Interactive play to boost mental stimulation
- Diet rich in essential nutrients to support their aging bodies.

