



February 2025



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello, Dia Duit!

As you can see to the left, there have been a few board member changes to start off our new year.

First, I am now president of the club! And because I've never been president before, I am hoping you all will help me out. I promise I will try my best to listen to any suggestions you all may have to help our club be even better than it is already. Thanks to Jodie for your dedication to the club and leaving it in good shape.

Susan Montgomery is our vice-president once again. And Joe Caballe joins us on the board for the first time. Thank you both for stepping up to help the club!

Tammy Aube is our new Show Chair this year. Tammy, thank you for all your hard work on the show so far and for doing a great job on our show's premium.

We look forward to a great year and Specialty Show.

Kathy

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If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact Kathy Lewis.

How Often Should I Wash My Dog's Bowl?

By Nandini Maharaj, Published: Jan 28, 2025 **AKC**

When you've finished eating a bowl of cereal or instant noodles, you might scrub your dishes by hand or stick them in the dishwasher. For many reasons, and the possibility of getting sick, you probably wouldn't put dirty dishes back in the cupboard or reuse your cereal-encrusted bowl the next morning. But can you say the same for your dog's food and water bowl?

Maybe you refill their water dish a few times before washing it. Or perhaps you add a fresh scoop of kibble to the bowl your dog licked clean earlier in the day. Even if your dog's bowl doesn't look dirty, improper handling of pet food and poor hygiene practices can result in contamination, putting you and your dog at risk for infection.

Below we share advice from veterinarians on how often to wash your dog's bowls, what types of dog bowls to use, and what to know about sharing food and water bowls if you have a multi-pet household.

When and Why Should You Wash Your Dog's Bowl?

"Dogs aren't the tidiest eaters," says Dr. Kelly Hood, DVM, in-house veterinary expert at Pet Portraits. "They drool, slop food around, and their mouths are full of bacteria that when mixed with food particles and moisture, can create the perfect environment for harmful microorganisms to thrive." Moreover, if you practice free-feeding, meaning leaving food out for dogs at all times, you're less likely to wash their bowl throughout the day.



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When bacteria adhere to wet surfaces like your dog's bowl, they produce a slimy substance called biofilm, according to an article in the journal *Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology*. The buildup of plaque on your teeth and soap scum in your drains are examples of biofilm, which is made up of a community of microorganisms including bacteria and yeast, as well as debris. The main reason to wash your dog's bowl is to break up this bacterial biofilm that can lead to illness.

Ideally, you should wash your dog's food and water bowls daily to avoid the accumulation of food residue and biofilm, which can be detrimental to the health of your pets and the rest of your family, says Dr. Jamie Whittenburg, DVM, director of Kingsgate Animal Hospital in Lubbock, TX. Her advice is to have two sets of bowls, so you can wash them in the dishwasher and always have a clean set. She also emphasizes the importance of providing your dog with fresh, clean drinking water.

Given the risk of infection from bacteria like salmonella and listeriosis, it's best to wash your dog's bowl after each meal with hot soapy water. "It might seem like a lot, but it's just like how we wouldn't use the same unwashed plate day after day," Dr. Hood says.

What Happens If You Don't Wash Your Dog's Bowl?

Food residue on your dog's bowl can attract insects and other pests. In addition, bacteria such as *E. coli* and salmonella may begin to grow and reproduce, creating a foul odor and leading to food poisoning. "These bacteria pose a serious risk to the health of pets and humans alike," Dr. Whittenburg says.

The National Sanitation Foundation reported that pet bowls are the fourth-germiest place in the home after dish sponges, kitchen sinks, and toothbrush holders. Another study of 351 dog caregivers and 186 cat caregivers found higher bacterial counts in pet bowls containing wet food compared to dry food. There were also higher levels of bacterial contamination when people washed bowls by hand compared to using the dishwasher.



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Depending on the level of bacteria present, your dog may experience minor stomach problems or skin issues. "In more serious cases, there might be potential infections that could make your dog very sick," Dr. Hood says. "Sometimes chronic diarrhea can be cleared up just by implementing a regular bowl washing routine."

If you hand wash your dog's bowl, you may want to disinfect the bowl once a week using bleach diluted with water. Let the bowls soak for 10 minutes and rinse thoroughly. If you're using the dishwasher, make sure the bowl is dishwasher-safe and use a high heat setting to kill bacteria. As long as your dog is healthy, and you wash their bowls regularly, you can wash dog bowls in the same load as your dishes.

How Do You Practice Good Bowl Hygiene?

The US Food and Drug Administration has specific guidelines on handling pet food. However, as reported in a study of 417 dog owners, fewer than 5% of dog owners were aware of these guidelines. Moreover, 36% of those surveyed had children or other immunocompromised individuals residing with them.

To keep your dog safe, the FDA recommends the following practices:

- Wash your hands before and after handling your dog's food and treats for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water
- Wash your dog's food bowls and scooping utensils with soap and hot water after each use

- Use a clean spoon or cup to measure your dog's food rather than using your dog's bowl
- Dispose of spoiled or expired food in a secure plastic bag and garbage bin

If food particles are stuck to the bowl, try soaking it in hot soapy water for 10 to 15 minutes. For extra cleaning power, you can use a scrubbing brush or mix baking soda and water to form a paste. You can then rinse off the soap and wipe the bowl with a clean cloth or let it air dry on a dish rack.



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When purchasing a bowl, both experts recommend choosing stainless steel for your dog's food and water bowl. This material is "basically indestructible, dishwasher-safe, and doesn't hang onto odors and bacteria like plastic does due to its non-porous material," Dr. Hood explains. In addition to being easier to clean, stainless steel bowls tend to "cause fewer allergic issues, especially in cats," Dr. Whittenburg says.

For a more aesthetically pleasing look, you may wish to purchase a non-toxic and high-quality ceramic bowl as an alternative to stainless steel. However, ceramic bowls tend to be heavier and aren't always dishwasher safe. Since they can be damaged if dropped, "keep an eye out for chips and cracks in these bowls, because bacteria can hide in the fissures," Dr. Hood adds.

Is It Safe for Pets to Share Water or Food Bowls?

"Pets in a home may share bowls, but care must be taken to provide enough bowls, especially for water so that each pet has adequate access,"

Dr. Whittenburg says. Although it's possible to transmit illness between pets via food or water bowls, "in most houses, the risk is higher from the pets being in direct contact with each other," she adds. Accordingly, all pets need to be healthy when sharing bowls.

In terms of food bowls, it's preferable to use separate bowls since your pets may be on different diets or feeding schedules. Sharing food bowls poses a risk of spreading illness, but it's also "a recipe for feeding time drama," Dr. Hood says. "If one of your pets needs a special diet or medication in their food, shared bowls become a problem. Giving each pet their own bowl is safer and lets you keep tabs on who's eating what and how much."



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Another reason for using separate bowls is when you're introducing a new pet to the household. "This situation may require quarantining of the new pet in their own area for a length of time," Dr. Whittenburg says. She recommends speaking to your veterinarian about quarantining new pets.

Part of being a responsible dog owner is making sure your dog has access to fresh drinking water along with serving them a nutritionally balanced and complete diet. Good food-handling practices can go a long way toward promoting the health of your pets and yourself. If you haven't been keeping your dog's bowls in tip-top shape, now is a good time to make it a habit.



Hey, Hey, Hey, listen up, listen up PVIWC Members,

I hope this letter finds you and your hounds doing well and staying warm! The 2025 PVIWC Specialty will be here before you know it and there is much to be done. This year, the PVIWC specialty conformation show judge is John Lewington (Greycroft) coming to us from Australia. Our Sweepstakes judge is Lynn Baker (Baker's Dogs, USA), and our Obedience and Rally events will be judged by Sandi Atkinson.

This year, the **Heart Study returns** to PVIWC. Pre-registration deadline: March 25, 2025. To learn more about the Heart Study visit <https://www.iwfoundation.org/screening-clinics> .

Sometime **near the lunch break on Sunday, 30 March**, Dr. Emily Seuss-Radford, a DVM on the Heart Study Team, will present her study on the sensitivity to enalapril in Irish Wolfhounds. The exact timing cannot be pinned down as we need to be as flexible as possible; the Heart Study Team works each client based on their needs, as they should, because we are here for the dogs – also available is the cardiac and eye testing clinic for your hounds.

We anticipate our raffle returning, as well as a daily silent auction! Look around and audit for quality items. Would you like to donate an item (or two) to the silent auction and have the proceeds raised be for the Show? Or maybe you are the shopper and looking for things...you will be thrilled at these items going into the Silent Auction. If you do have a donation, reach out to **Tammy at elkhorniws@gmail.com** for more information.

It is a great excuse for you to take a day of vacation time from work to get away from the hustle and bustle of your normal routine and change it up a bit. Meet others that share in your Irish Wolfhound enthusiasm. Please sign up to volunteer for a couple hours each day and have loads of fun as PVIWC has an excellent Show Committee Team working behind the scenes already. ***Please consider joining the fun and comradery (if you know you want to volunteer send an email to Tammy at elkhorniws@gmail.com (subject: PVIWC volunteer).*** If we haven't seen you at other regional specialties throughout the year, then it may be time to spend a moment catching up with IW acquaintances near the Announcer's Stand to welcome and meet a few new IW owners. How exciting!

Just as important as volunteering time are the finances it takes to put on a Dog Show; and PVIWC is a small, breed specific, club. We pay for experienced judges, the trophies, rosettes, and securing the event site. I am asking for your generous support (large or small) this year. Donations of any size will be accepted, appreciated, and recognized in the 2025 Show Catalog. Donations received by March 8, 2025, will be acknowledged in the show catalog (I can guarantee this because I am producing the catalog and Christina is the Show Secretary and Treasurer).

If donating by check, you can specify donations to areas (trophy / rosettes / show / General Fund / Rescue). You can donate to PVIWC, Christina Buckner is PVIWC's Treasurer and Show Secretary, by:

1) you can electronic payment via PayPal to: pviwctreasury@gmail.com and leave a note in the app (or on the check) that this is a specialty donation, earmarking the funds for the area(s) you want them to go towards, or

2) send a check made payable to Potomac Valley IW Club to:

PVIWC Treasurer, Christina Buckner

1348 Sycamore Ave.

Annapolis, MD 21403

On behalf of the entire membership of the PVIWC Show Committee, we hope to see you in 2025!

Respectfully,

Tammy McNeely-Aube

2025 PVIWC Specialty Chair

Interactive Toys


By [blondehair bluenose](#)

Interactive toys are trending for all the right reasons! They're an amazing way to give your dog a fun project, buy yourself some time, and provide much-needed mental enrichment.







But one question I hear all the time is: What do you put in them?

The world shouts, "Peanut butter!" And sure, peanut butter is a classic favorite, but is it really the best option for regular use?

Peanut butter isn't "bad," but it's rich, high in fat, and calorie-dense. While a little here and there is fine, giving it daily (or even a few times a week) can add up—on your dog's waistline, pancreas and your wallet. So, what's the solution? You can still use peanut butter, but let's mix it up! Here's a healthier and more cost-effective recipe that your dog will love:

DIY Interactive Toy Filler * 1/4 part canned pumpkin * 1/2–1 part plain nonfat yogurt * 1/4 part peanut butter  Mix it up, stuff those toys, and top with freeze-dried treats for an extra motivator!

Pro Tip: Freeze the stuffed toy for a long-lasting challenge. This will keep your pup entertained while you take a break or handle a busy day.

More Tasty Stuffing Options * Mushy banana  * Blueberries  * Canned or gently cooked dog food  * Bone broth  * Shredded Carrots  * Kibble soaked in bone broth (great for a midday meal!) 

The key is variety! Don't fall into the peanut butter trap—make your pup's interactive time nutritious, engaging, and fun.

Extra Tip for Busy Days

Split your dog's meal: Feed half at regular mealtime (pups are creatures of habit) and save the other half for an interactive toy session. Prep this ahead of time or keep a few stuffed toys ready in the freezer. If you feed kibble, mix it with a binder like plain yogurt or bone broth butter for an extra challenge.

Interactive toys aren't just fun—they're essential for keeping your pup mentally stimulated and focused. Give them something to work on, and enjoy some guilt-free "me-time" while they're happily occupied!

Is Spay and Neuter Really the Best Choice for Your Dog? Experts Speak Out



by Dr. Peter Dobias, DVM

A New Perspective on The Decades-Old Practice of Conventional Spaying and Neutering in Dogs

Once in a few decades, a medical discovery leads to a dramatic change in how we care for ourselves, and or our beloved canine companions.

The scientific research and discovery of the negative impact of conventional spaying and neutering of our dogs is one such moment, paving the way for a brighter future in veterinary medicine, healthcare, and a longer life for your beloved dog.

While more research is needed, science has confirmed that the removal and absence of hormones in dogs has far-reaching health consequences. Muscular-skeletal injuries, ligament tears, arthritis, chronic inflammation, pain, thyroid and adrenal issues, allergies, organ dysfunction, and behavior problems such as fear and aggression. The rate of certain forms of cancer is also related to conventional neutering and spaying.

As a result of these significant findings, the **World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) has made a landmark decision.** As of May 2024, they no

longer endorse conventional spay and neuter procedures, marking a profound shift in the field of veterinary medicine.

The Best of Both Worlds: Natural Alternatives and Evidence-Based Solutions

As devoted dog parents, you and I care about everything from the training methods to the food and supplements we give our dogs, regular exercise, and the toys they play with. Most importantly, when it comes to preventative care, you want the best of both worlds: natural alternatives and practices based on current data, rooted in solid science.

Perhaps no other healthcare decision you'll make has as great an impact on the long-term health of your dog, as when, how, and perhaps if, you should spay or neuter your dog.

For decades, early spaying and neutering dogs has been the routine practice of veterinarians, and shelters, and was considered the gold standard of care. In many ways, it was viewed as a defining choice of responsible pet ownership.

Yet, what if the conventional practice behind these surgeries is no longer as beneficial as once thought? What if this standard of care persists purely because most people don't question the impact of the absence of hormones in our dogs?

For many decades rescue organizations, veterinarians and responsible pet guardians focused mainly on preventing dog and cat overpopulation and reducing homelessness.

However, thanks to the increasing number of studies on the effects of conventional spaying and neutering of dogs, it is our duty to reassess the practice of spaying and neutering.

I too have had to shift in the face of my own clinical experience and these new scientific discoveries.

The good news is that with the updated guidelines for dog sterilization, we can still satisfy the reasonable goal of rescue organizations to prevent homelessness while preserving the health of our beloved dogs.

If you're here because you've not yet spayed or neutered your dog and want to make as informed a decision as possible, you've come to the right place. Perhaps your dog has already been spayed or neutered— you too have come to the right place.

Here we'll explore the historical origins of these practices, and the cutting-edge, modern scientific research, highlight emerging viable alternatives, and empower you to make informed choices.

The Origins of Spaying and Neutering: A Historical Perspective In ancient civilizations, spaying and neutering dogs was used for population control. In ancient

Greece, Rome, and Egypt, animals were often castrated to make them more docile, and manageable.

By the early 20th century urbanization brought pets into closer contact with humans. By the early sixties, to lower euthanasia rates, reduce overpopulation, and control stray dog populations, animal welfare organizations emerged, such as the ASPCA, which advocated the procedure of early spaying and neutering dogs.

As a result, this became the standard of care and believed to convey additional health benefits, such as lower cancer risk.

In recent years, new research has emerged on the early desexing of dogs that has raised concerns about the harmful impact that the absence of hormones has on nearly all systems, leading to various health and behavior issues in both male and female dogs.



The Role of Hormones in Canine Health: More Than Just Reproduction

Just like humans, every dog needs to have sufficient hormones to fully develop, have functioning organs, and reduce the risk of disease. Sex hormones play a vital role in reproduction; however, their role reaches far beyond reproduction.

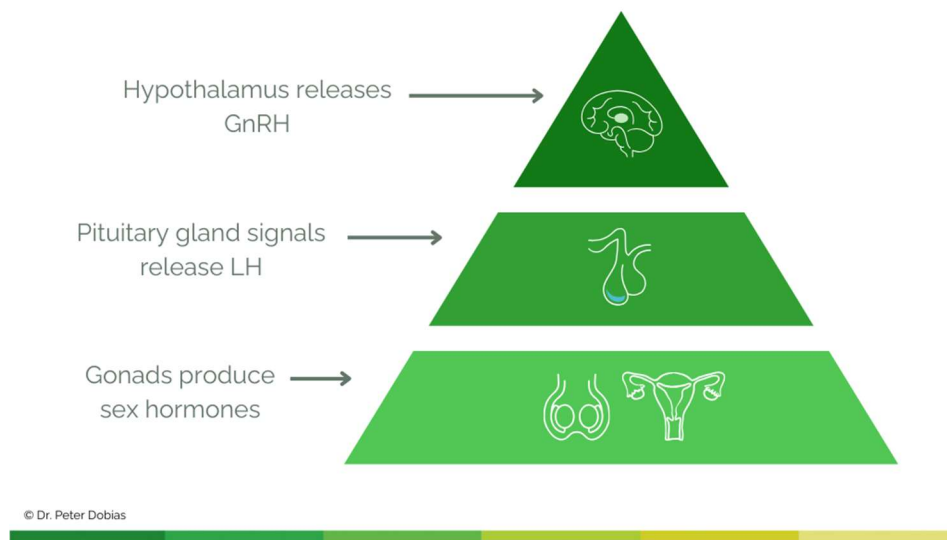
The Biology of the Hormone Production in Brief

While the testicles or ovaries are hormone producing glands, there's a whole cascade of processes. It all starts in the hypothalamus, located deep within the central portion of the brain. It can be seen as the connector between the brain and the endocrine (hormone) system translating sensory stimuli from the eyes and nose. For example, when a male smells or sees a female in heat.

The hypothalamus releases the GnRH (gonadotropin-releasing hormone), which sends a signal to the pituitary gland to release the luteinizing hormone (LH). When LH reaches the gonads, testicles, and ovaries, it triggers the production of the sex hormones testosterone and estrogen. Further down the cascade, when the pituitary gland registers lower levels of testosterone and estrogen, it releases LH, which leads to more hormone production.

This system is similar to a flushing toilet. If there is enough water in the tank the valve closes. If the tank is empty the valve opens.

HORMONE REGULATION

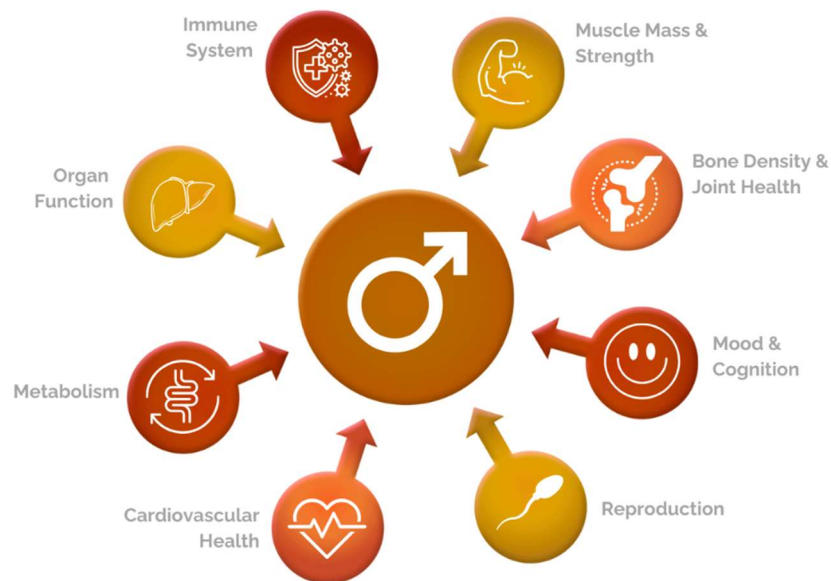


The Main Role of Testosterone in Male Dogs

- **Muscle Mass and Strength:** Testosterone is vital for muscle growth and maintenance, contributing to greater muscle mass in males.
- **Bone Density:** It supports bone health by promoting bone density, and reducing the risk of fractures.

- **Mood and Cognition:** Testosterone influences mood, energy levels, and cognitive functions. Low levels can lead to depression and cognitive decline.
- **Libido:** Affects sexual desire and arousal.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** Maintaining normal testosterone levels can improve cardiovascular health by enhancing lipid profiles and reducing visceral fat.
- **Metabolism:** Testosterone plays a role in regulating fat distribution and overall metabolism, impacting body composition.
- **Organ Function:** Testosterone is crucial for maintaining muscle mass, bone density, and red blood cell production. It also influences liver function and lipid metabolism.
- **Immunity:** Testosterone can modulate immune function, often exerting an immunosuppressive effect that may reduce inflammation but also potentially lower resistance to infections.

Role of Hormones in Male Dogs



© Dr. Peter Dobias

www.peterdobias.com

The Main Roles of Female Dog Hormones

Estrogen:

- **Bone Health:** Supports bone density and reduces the risk of osteoporosis.

- **Cardiovascular System:** Helps regulate cholesterol levels and maintain vascular health.
- **Central Nervous System:** Influences mood, and cognitive function, and may reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.
- **Liver function** by influencing the production of certain proteins and enzymes.
- **Immunity:** Estrogen modulates immune responses, potentially enhancing the body's ability to fight infections and reducing inflammation.
- **Skin and Hair:** Promotes skin hydration and elasticity, and affects hair growth patterns.

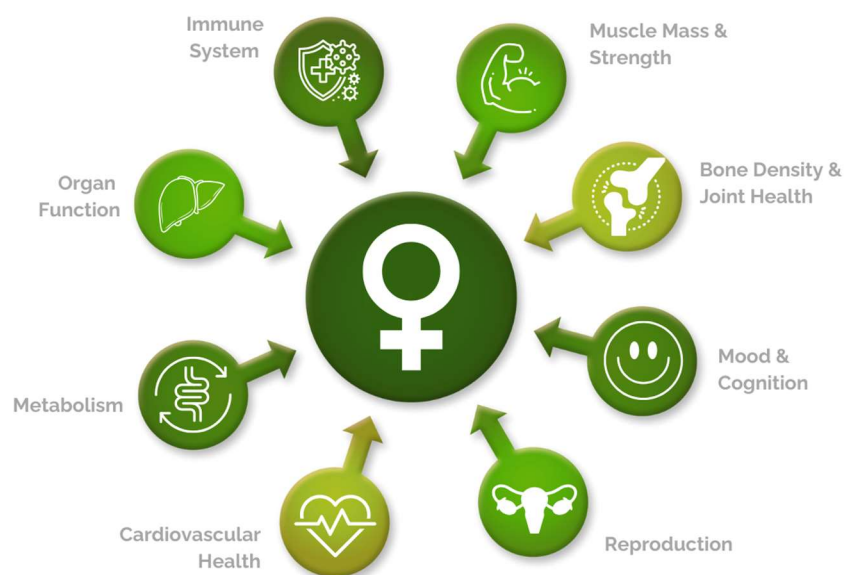
Progesterone:

- **Menstrual Cycle Regulation:** Stabilizes menstrual cycles and prepares the body for pregnancy.
- **Mood and Sleep:** This may influence mood stability and quality of sleep.

Testosterone:

- **Muscle and Bone Mass:** Contributes to muscle strength and bone density.
- **Libido:** Affects sexual desire and arousal.

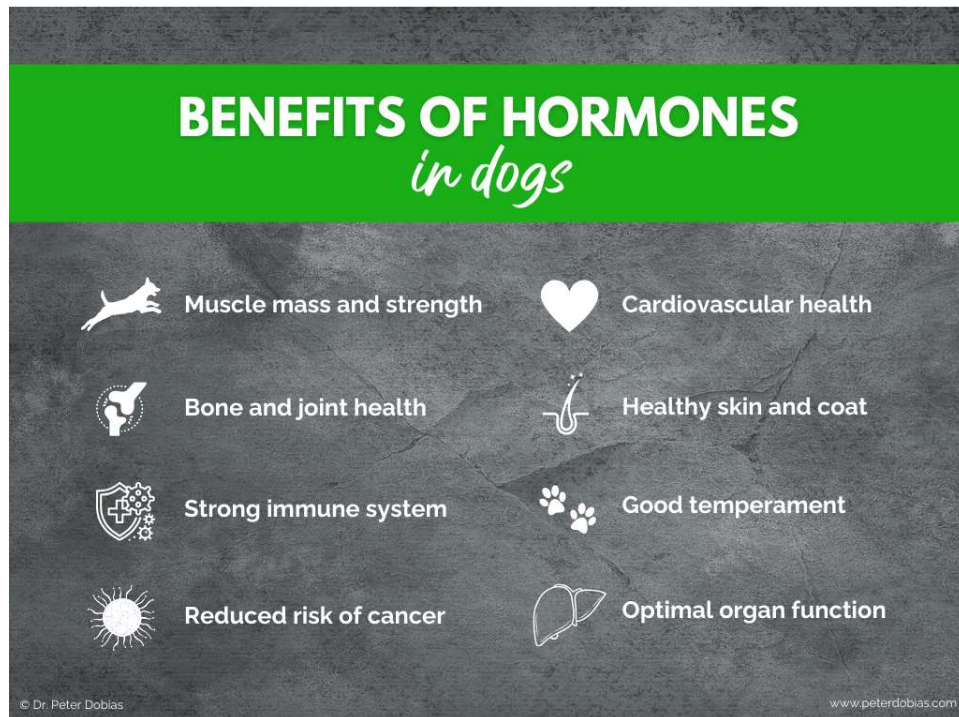
Role of Hormones in Female Dogs



Hormonal Balance and Overall Health

Hormones like testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone do more than regulate reproduction; they influence a dog's metabolism, immune system, temperament, and even mental health.

These hormones are removed through traditional spay and neuter procedures and may lead to a range of health issues, from joint disorders to increased cancer risk and behavioral changes.



The Biological and Health Consequences of Removing Gonads in Conventional Spay and Neuter Procedures

For the longest time, most of us veterinarians didn't question traditional spay and neuter procedures, nor did we consider the long-term consequences of the absence of hormones.

Most vets, shelters, and rescue organizations have been so focused on reducing pet overpopulation and homelessness, that the health problems caused by removing the gonads have gone unnoticed.

As we've seen, multiple studies now confirm health problems, depression, behavior issues and cancers. Interestingly, some of these studies were originally inspired by research done in women in menopause who suffer similar symptoms.

So, what happens in neutered and spayed animals?

When gonads and ovaries are removed, the pituitary gland overproduces LH in an attempt to restore sex hormone levels, which is an impossibility in altered animals. This results in LH levels that are often 30-50 times higher than normal. LH then attaches to receptors in other tissues, ligaments, the thyroid gland, the brain, skin, intestinal lining, joints, and more.

This elevated LH leads to a rise in inflammation in the affected tissues. An out-of-balance inflammation response can wreak havoc. As the luteinizing hormone elevates 30, 50 times or higher, chronic health issues may develop, along with behavior problems such as fear, anxiety and or aggression.

Does Age and Breed Make a Difference?

A 2023 research paper by Benjamin Hart, et al (with the support of the American Kennel Club and the UC Davis Center for Companion Health) titled; [*Decision-Making on Recommended Age of Spay/Neuter for a Specific Dog: General Principles and Cultural Complexity*](#), offers evidence that the removal of hormones through traditional spay and neuter procedures may lead to a range of health issues, from joint disorders to increased cancer risks.

Based on research and my own experiences, sadly, these biological changes affect all spayed and neutered animals— no matter how early or late. Early spay or neutering does; however, appear to be more detrimental. Most puppies are neutered before they achieve maturity, and the trend has been to desex dogs as early as two to three months.

Additionally, this deficit delays closure of growth plates which can lead to problems of shoulder, elbow, and hip dysplasia. In general, larger breeds appear to be at greater risk because they do not fully mature until 18 to 24 months.

The Known Risks of Early Spay and Neuter: What the Science Says

Joint Disorders and Musculoskeletal Health

Dr. Benjamin Hart and his colleagues at the University of California, Davis, [*highlight in their research*](#), the significant risks of joint disorders, particularly in large breeds.



Removing hormone-producing organs at a young age disrupts the endocrine system, leading to serious consequences like an increased risk of aggressive cancers.

Cancer Risks

Studies have found that early neutering increases the risk of certain cancers, such as lymphoma, osteosarcoma, and hemangiosarcoma. Dr. Karen Becker explains that *"Removing hormone-producing organs at a young age disrupts the endocrine system, leading to serious consequences like an increased risk of aggressive cancers"*.



... hormonal imbalances can make dogs more reactive to stress and prone to fear-based behaviors.

Behavioral Issues Linked to Hormonal Changes

Elevated levels of luteinizing hormone (LH) post-neutering can trigger inflammation in the brain, leading to anxiety, fear, and even aggression. [Dr. Jack Oliver from the University of Tennessee](#), notes that these hormonal imbalances can make dogs more reactive to stress and prone to fear-based behaviors.

These risks I've highlighted in this section, are the tip of the iceberg. Chronic conditions such as inflammatory, endocrine, immune, or metabolic diseases may also be linked, either partially or entirely, to the absence of essential hormones.

Imagine your car without fuel or oil. Without the proper inputs, your vehicle won't run at all, or the engine will burn out. In the same way, your dog needs the proper hormones to keep their system firing on all cylinders.

Hormone-Sparing Sterilization: A Solution for Optimal, Long-Term Health

I can imagine, some people being unhappy about the proposal that the traditional spay and neutering procedures should be a thing of the past. I believe these concerns stem mainly from the misunderstanding that changing our approach could lead to homelessness and dog abandonment

The [revised 2024 guidelines from WSAVA](#) should help alleviate those concerns. Their recommendation outlines an approach that both prevents unwanted pregnancies and homelessness and prioritizes optimal health and longevity. WSAVA suggests:

- Dogs living with responsible guardians should remain intact as they are able to prevent unwanted breeding by keeping female dogs in heat under direct supervision and prevent the free roaming of male dogs.

- In rescue shelters or living in situations where unplanned pregnancies can't be avoided, dogs should undergo hormone-sparing sterilization: vasectomies and ovary-sparing hysterectomies.

This protocol ensures that dogs grow up benefiting from sex hormones and avoiding the health problems linked to conventional neutering and spaying.

Hormone replacement therapy for dogs that have already been spayed or neutered.

Hormone replacement has been extensively studied in women in menopause, where great progress has been achieved. Even the early concerns about hormone replacement therapy and its possible connection with cancer have now been debunked.

If your dog has been spayed or neutered—or if your dog receives treatment for any chronic ongoing condition, mobility issue, repeated injuries, allergies, immune system and hormonal disorders, behavior problems, and low energy. It is reasonable to consider hormone replacement therapy.

From [findings of Dr. Michelle Kutzler](#) and other researchers (and my own clinical experience), I believe a high number of neutered and spayed patients in veterinary medicine suffer from some form of what is now being referred to as "spay and neuter syndrome."

How to Help Your Dog if it Suffers From "Spay and Neuter Syndrome"

Certainly, not every health problem your dog may experience can be attributed to this issue. However, just as thyroid, adrenal, and insulin levels all play a vital role in overall health and longevity, the same is true for the importance of sex hormones.

Regrettably, we veterinarians have not been taught this. Our focus has primarily been on the welfare related aspects of spaying and neutering— not thinking the removal of the gonads could be damaging our patient's health.

For better or worse, the history of medicine is intertwined with similar discoveries and the inevitable paradigm shifts. This is how we evolve.

With these evolutionary insights, it is now clear that spayed and neutered dogs may benefit from hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

A Hormone Replacement Protocol for Male Dogs

Step 1. Suprelorin (Deslorelin) Implant Under the Skin

Originally intended to stop luteinizing hormone production as a form of non-surgical sterilization, this microchip-sized implant is a GnRH agonist. In lay terms, it increases

the production of gonadotropin-releasing hormone in the hypothalamus, which paradoxically shuts down the production of LH.

There are two sizes of implants: 4.7 mg (six-month duration) and 9.4 mg (12-month duration). Generally, I suggest the use of the six-month implant (initially). Then decide if a six-month or twelve-month implant is more convenient for consecutive implants. *

The effect of the implant will be noticed almost immediately. My dog Pax was very sleepy and appeared tired for a few days, and the decrease in LH (luteinizing hormone) related inflammation in the muscles, joints and back was very noticeable.

**Note: Suprelorin is currently approved for dogs in the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and Canada where only a 4.7 mg implant is available.*

In the USA, Suprelorin is only approved for use in ferrets. However, many other veterinary medications are used off-label. If possible, find a holistic or open-minded veterinarian and propose that you sign a waiver of responsibility to have the microchip implanted.

Step 2: Testosterone Administration

The current testosterone replacement protocol suggests 0.5 mg/kg subcutaneously (under the skin) weekly. This is a very simple administration that any dog guardian can do on their own.

Your dog will likely show increased interest in females and other dogs, sniffing and urine marking. Some dogs may try to "hump" other dogs more or display other forms of sexual behavior but this can be generally addressed by training and basic obedience.

There is still a stigma that persists around testosterone administration as it is abused by bodybuilders. However, the doses used in dogs are in much lower physiological amounts, and are therefore unlikely to cause side effects or health issues beyond the normal realm of intact dogs.

Based on research and also my own personal experience, the overwhelmingly positive effect of HRT on the physical and emotional well-being of dogs is undeniable.

A Hormone Replacement Protocol for Female Dogs

The idea of conducting studies on the effect of ovary-hysterectomy came from human studies of the effect of menopause in women. Inflammation, joint and muscle pain, depression, brain fog, and decreased quality of life have been confirmed to be connected with pre-menopause and menopause.

Given all we know, and has been studied in menopausal women, it should come as no surprise that female dogs with no sex hormones undergo similar changes. One of the

most commonly observed problems is urinary bladder incontinence or sphincter incompetence.

For many decades this condition has been treated in veterinary medicine with supplementing estrogens, which is in effect, a form of hormone replacement therapy.

While female dogs have a much more complex hormonal cycle consisting of the production of estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone based on whether they are in heat, pregnant, or nursing, the current HRT protocol consists of the following:

Step 1: Suprelorin (deslorelin) Implant

Initially, request that your veterinarian run the LH level test to confirm if the luteinizing hormone is elevated. If so, start with a 4.7 mg subcutaneous implant (under the skin).

Step 2: Supplementing Estrogens

Based on the recommendation of a board certified theriogenology (male and female reproduction) specialist, the current hormone replacement therapy in spayed females is identical to the protocol used for the treatment of urinary incontinence.

It consists of the administration of either estriol (2 mg/dog) orally every 24 hours for 14 days, then reduced to 1 mg daily, or diethylstilbesterol (0.1-1 mg/dog) every 24 hours for 3–5 days then weekly or as needed.

Suprelorin may need to be added to this treatment, depending upon the ability of the estrogen replacement to significantly lower LH concentrations.

This means that LH levels should be ideally measured before the start of hormone replacement therapy and then in 1 and 3 months after the start to see if LH is at normal levels.

My general impression is that this protocol may be finely tuned as more research is done as estrogen levels naturally fluctuate during the cycle of intact females.

During anestrus, the phase when the dog is not in heat, estrogen levels are at their lowest. To add to the challenge, specific numerical values for non-estrus estrogen levels in dogs are not readily available.

There are also some opinions that the supplementation of low-dose estrogen and testosterone should be considered as they both are produced by the ovaries in intact females.



The change in Pax's mobility after starting hormone replacement therapy was almost immediate.

Real-World Success Stories of Hormone Replacement Therapy

What happened to my dog and his progress on Hormone Replacement Therapy

At the age of 18 months, my beautiful Border Collie, Pax, was a healthy and strong dog. About six months after he was neutered, I started to notice that Pax would occasionally limp, getting progressively worse.

Tests, X-rays, and other exams were inconclusive, and despite rest, rehabilitation and physical therapy, he was not getting better.

For three years, we could no longer enjoy the beach, swimming, and mountain hiking together and it was heartbreaking to see him hobbling around.

I was devastated.

His challenges prompted me to search for answers to his unexplained lameness, and eventually, I came across the research of [Dr. Michelle Kutzler](#) and [Dr. Linda Brent](#) and decided to start Pax on the hormone replacement therapy protocol mentioned above.

His transformation has been incredibly positive similar to dogs in the research studies.

Almost immediately, Pax became happier, had more energy, and slept less during the day. His coat has become thicker, his mane is longer and more pronounced. You can see what happened in the before and after video below.

He's everything I would expect from a 5-year-old dog.

As for any negative effects. He has not displayed any. Except for more sniffing, being even more cuddly with us, friendly with other dogs and the rare attempt to "hump."

It took about two months for him to recover from his lameness and injuries. I am thrilled to report he's been running, hiking, and swimming as before his procedure and he is happy, and injury free.



He continues to get .2mg/kg of testosterone cypionate subcutaneously (injection under the skin) weekly and will get a new implant as required (every six or twelve months) depending on the potency of Suprelorin I decide on.

Challenges and Pitfalls: What's Holding Back Change?

No Time for Division

As with any landmark discovery, some people will recognize and feel comfortable with change. Others will need time. Instead of finger-pointing and dividing into separate camps, conventional spay and neuter vs. hormone-sparing, [the official 2024 WSAVA](#) guidelines clearly suggest we can have both.

A paradigm shift in dog population control is emerging, focusing on ovary-sparing spay and vasectomy procedures in shelters while allowing dogs with responsible owners to remain intact. This approach represents a more compassionate and nuanced strategy for managing dog populations.

According to reports from [Parsemus.org](#), an organization that has participated in some of the main research, there is already an increased demand for veterinarians who do hormone-sparing procedures.

Market demand has always been the most powerful force for change, and I believe this is no different.

Conclusion: Rethinking Spay and Neuter for Your Dog's Health and Longevity

As a responsible pet parent and dog lover, the choice of whether to neuter or spay your dog is among the most important decisions you'll make. Thanks to the compelling body of scientific evidence available, it's clear that the removal of your dog's reproductive organs may lead to far-reaching health consequences, which I have summarized here.

I have no doubt that hormone-sparing procedures, or leaving your dog intact will have a profound positive impact on your dog's health and longevity.

If you're considering spaying or neutering your dog, now's a good time to evaluate the alternatives. Consider the option that is most likely to provide your dog with

the very best outcome, today and in the years to come— for their best life, and your peace of mind.

Solutions and Actionable Steps You Can Take

What next?

Millions of dogs suffer unnecessarily from life-altering health problems as a result of traditional spay and neuter practices. As a dog parent, you may have experienced some of these health issues yourself. Armed with information, you can make a difference, and relieve additional suffering.

To participate in this movement, and prevent more animals from falling into the outdated spay and neuter procedures, here's how you can get involved:

1. Support and promote more research through Parsemus.org and other research centers to conduct more studies.
2. Financially support adequate education and training of veterinarians and veterinary students. Currently, [Dr. Michelle Kutzler](#) has been training veterinarians who are interested in the new methods.
3. Create public awareness and work with rescue shelters and organizations in your area to transition to hormone-sparing sterilization procedures.

If you would like to contribute financially to support HRT and hormone sparing sterilization in dogs, please tap the button below:

The Current Science on Hormone-Sparing Alternatives for Health and Longevity

Index:

- 1) [A New Perspective on Spaying and Neutering](#)
- 2) [Best of Both Worlds: Natural Alternatives and Evidence-Based Solutions](#)
- 3) [The Origins of Spaying and Neutering: A Historical Perspective](#)
- 4) [The Role of Hormones in Canine Health: More Than Just Reproduction](#)
 - [Testosterone's Importance in Male Dogs](#)
 - [Estrogen and Progesterone's Roles in Female Dogs](#)
 - [Hormonal Balance and Overall Health](#)
5. [Health Risks of Early Spay and Neuter Procedures: What the Science Says](#)

- [Joint Disorders and Musculoskeletal Health](#)
- [Cancer Risks Associated with Early Neutering](#)
- [Behavioral Issues Linked to Hormonal Changes](#)
- 6. [Hormone-Sparing Sterilization: A Healthier Alternative](#)
- 7. [Hormone replacement therapy for spayed or neutered dogs](#)
 - [Hormone Replacement Protocol for Male Dogs](#)
 - [Hormone Replacement Protocol for Female Dogs](#)
- [Real-world Success Stories of Hormone Replacement Therapy](#)
- 7. [Challenges and Pitfalls: What's Holding Back Change?](#)
- 8. [Solutions and Actionable Steps for Pet Owners](#)
- 9. [Interviews With Experts](#)

Paw Balm Recipe

This helps keep their paws protected from snow and ice and it is safe for your dogs to lick.

Put it on their paws before going outside for a walk in icy and snowy, cold weather to help prevent ice and mini snowball build-up in their paw pads. It's also good after playing in the snow to help keep their paws from drying and cracking.

Recipe

2 oz. (~ 2 tbsp.) olive oil

2 oz. (~ 2 tbsp.) coconut oil

1 oz. (~ 1 tbsp.) shea butter

4 tsp. beeswax

Gently melt everything together in a double boiler. Once melted remove balm from heat and carefully pour into a clean, small tin or jar. Let it cool until solid. Place on the lid and label the jar with name, date and ingredients. Use as needed for soft paws and protection.

Good for their noses too!



[Howard County Animal Control and Adoption Center](#)

Does Your Dog Need a Sweater? Why Some Dogs Benefit From Sweaters

By Sassafras Patterdale, CPDT-KA, CTDI, Updated: Oct 16, 2024 **AKC**

From holiday sweaters to hoodies, there are a variety of dog sweaters available on the market. But aside from looking cute, does your dog really need one? For some dogs, the answer is yes.

As the weather outside starts to get cold, it's important to ensure that your dog is warm and comfortable. While some breeds of dogs naturally have a dense fur coat that keeps them warm in cold weather, that isn't the case for all dogs. Many dogs could benefit from wearing sweaters during the cooler seasons.

Benefits of Dog Sweaters

Although you may think dog sweaters are just a way to dress your dog up, most sweaters serve the practical purpose of keeping dogs warm. Because they're soft and don't restrict movement, many dogs can adjust quickly to wearing them. Sweaters are also usually less warm than dog jackets, so they can be more comfortable for dogs to wear inside the house.

Sweaters can also be useful to help reduce shedding fur in environments that need to be kept clean. Dog sweaters can also help protect healing and irritated skin from being scratched while your dog is healing from an injury. While outside, sweaters can even help protect that sensitive skin from being scratched by branches and can help to keep your dog clean.



Frisco Bobble-Knit Dog & Cat Turtleneck Sweater

Do Dogs Need Sweaters?

Not every dog is going to need or benefit from wearing a sweater. Large breeds of dogs who are healthy and have a thick coat of fur generally don't need to wear sweaters and could even overheat in them.

Dogs that can become cold easily are some of the main candidates for sweaters. Dogs that most frequently struggle in colder temperatures are small dogs, especially toy breeds, and dogs without thick fur. Lean dogs with short fur, such as Azawakhs, Whippets, and Greyhounds, also frequently benefit from sweaters during cold weather since they don't have a lot of fur or body fat to insulate them.

Hairless breeds, including the Xoloitzcuintli, American Hairless Terrier, Peruvian Inca Orchid, and Chinese Crested Dog, may need sweaters during cool and cold weather as they can become cold quickly. Other dogs who benefit from sweaters include dogs whose fur has been shaved, young puppies, and senior dogs.

Dog Sweater Size and Fit

When selecting sweaters for your dog it's important to ensure you pick the right size and fit. A properly fitting dog sweater will fit your dog without being too big or too tight. A baggy sweater can result in your dog getting caught or tangled in the sweater. Not only is this uncomfortable, but it can also be scary or cause your dog to trip and get injured. On the other hand, a sweater that is too tight can restrict movement, which is uncomfortable and can also lead to injuries. A properly fitted sweater should allow your dog to move normally and not restrict their movement while they walk, run, or play.



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To properly measure your dog for a sweater you'll need a soft measuring tape. This will allow you to easily measure different areas of your dog's body. Sweater measurements usually include the length of your dog's back, around their chest, and the size of your dog's neck. Before purchasing a sweater for your dog, make sure to check the measurements to ensure the sweater will appropriately fit your dog. Just like with human clothing, the same size in different brands will likely fit differently. For example, your dog might be a size small in one brand, but a medium or extra-small in another. This is why it's so important to check the measurements for a sweater before purchasing.

Picking the Right Sweater

In addition to selecting a sweater that is the right size for your dog, you'll also want to pick the right kind of sweater. Dog sweaters come in different styles and weights. For extra cold weather, your dog will want to wear a thicker sweater to keep them warm. For weather that is cool but not cold, a lighter sweater will keep your dog cozy.

If you're putting a sweater on your dog to help prevent shedding, pick a full-body sweater that covers your dog's body and legs. Full-body sweaters are also great for dogs who are recovering from surgery or have itchy skin that you're trying to protect.

Another feature to look for when purchasing sweaters is a built-in hole for a leash or harness attachment to go through. This will make it easy to put your dog's sweater on over their harness before walking. Sweaters that

have legs also are ideal for especially cold weather as they help insulate more of your dog's body.

How to Clean and Maintain Dog Sweaters

One mistake that dog owners will often make with dog sweaters is to not wash them frequently. Just like our clothes, when our dog wears a sweater they get dirty. Dog sweaters need to be washed regularly to keep them clean and sanitary. Sweaters can take on the oil from your dog's skin and coat, as well as dirt, and mud they might pick up while on a walk, or playing in your yard. This can lead to sweaters being smelly, or even cause skin irritations for your dog.

It can be helpful to have enough sweaters that you can wash them each time your dog wears one. Be sure to follow the washing and drying instructions on each of your dog's sweaters. While most dog sweaters are machine-washable, some may require handwashing and need to be air dried. Following washing instructions will help keep your dog's sweaters from shrinking and will help them stay looking their best for as long as possible.



SVPhilon/Getty Images Plus

How to Get Your Dog Comfortable Wearing a Sweater

The key to making sure your dog is comfortable wearing sweaters is to intentionally introduce them to wearing clothes. First, let your dog explore the sweater with it lying on the floor or held in your hand. Praise your dog for sniffing and exploring the sweater. When your dog is comfortable with the sweater being near them, put the sweater on your dog.

Be sure to give your dog lots of praise and small treats. By pairing wearing the sweater with praise and treats, you're helping your dog to develop positive associations with wearing a sweater. At this stage, keep the sweater on for a very short period, then remove the sweater. Each practice session slowly increases the amount of time your dog is wearing their sweater.

While your dog has the sweater on, engage your dog in activities that they enjoy, such as playing with toys. Not only does this help create a positive association with wearing the sweater, but it also helps provide a positive distraction to your dog, so they'll forget they're wearing the sweater. The more familiar your dog becomes with wearing their sweater, the longer they can comfortably wear one.

Supervise Dogs in Sweaters

Avoid leaving your dog unattended while they're wearing a sweater. Dogs who are unsupervised can become entangled in their sweaters, which could lead to injuries. Even dogs who are comfortable and like wearing sweaters can accidentally become tangled. If you're going to leave your dog unattended at home or in a crate, it's best to remove the sweater first.

Fundraiser Link...

to buy new club logo short/long sleeve t-shirts, hoodie and crew neck sweatshirts. Please consider buying one or more items to help fund our Specialty Show on March 30 – 31, 2025!

https://www.customink.com/fundraising/pviwc-show-fundraiser-8539?utm_campaign=desktop-post-launch-v3&utm_content=pviwc-show-fundraiser-8539&utm_medium=social&utm_source=copy-link

Thank you for supporting our club!



Dear Friends of the Potomac Valley Irish Wolfhound Club,

The Potomac Valley Irish Wolfhound Club's (PVIWC) Specialty is scheduled to take place March 30-31, 2025. Every year members, friends, and exhibitors financially contribute to sponsor trophies and ribbons, either in whole or in part. It has been through these generous contributions that the PVIWC specialty is a success.

Many individuals contribute in various ways: some work up front under the main tent; some work behind the scenes to ensure the rings, tables and tents are up for the shows and help breakdown the same, after the final show; some make donations to the raffle; and some through monetary donations. On behalf of the PVIWC, I express great appreciation to past contributors.

I ask you to consider sponsoring or making a financial donation to this year's general trophy fund. Your donation(s) will help sponsor the trophies and ribbons this year. There is no such thing as a donation too small.

To contribute, please complete the enclosed form and send it along with your financial donation (check payable to PVIWC) to:

Christina Buckner
PVIWC Treasurer and Show Secretary
1348 Sycamore Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403

Your donations for the 2025 Specialty are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continuing generosity.

Sincerely,

Virginia Bañales Thackston
PVIWC Trophy Committee

Ribbon and Trophy Sponsorship Specification and Guide

Sponsorship of First in each class-\$18.00

Sponsorship of Second in each class-\$15.00

Or Sponsor the entire class for \$50.00

Sponsorship of Third in each class-\$12.00

Sponsorship of Fourth in each class-\$10.00

_____ 6-9 mo. Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ 9-12 mo. Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ 12-15 mo. Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ 15-18 mo. Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ Novice Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ AOH Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ Bred-By Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ Am-Bred Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ Open Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ Veteran Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ Stud Dog 1 2 3 4

_____ 6-9 mo. Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ 9-12 mo. Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ 12-15 mo. Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ 15-18 mo. Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ Novice Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ AOH Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ Bred-By Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ Am-Bred Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ Open Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ Veteran Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ Brood Bitch 1 2 3 4

_____ Obedience - \$50

_____ Rally - \$50

Trophy Sponsorship/Mementos to Challenge Trophies Donation

_____ Best of Breed \$125

_____ Best of Opposite \$115

_____ Best of Winners \$100

_____ Winners Dog \$100

_____ Winners Bitch \$100

_____ Am-Bred Dog \$30

_____ Open Dog \$30

_____ Best Puppy \$75

_____ Best in Sweeps \$75

_____ Reserve Winners Dog \$50

_____ Reserve Winners Bitch \$50

_____ Bred-By-Exhibitor Dog \$30

_____ Bred-By-Exhibitor Bitch \$30

_____ Best BBE \$40

_____ Am-Bred Bitch \$30

_____ Open Bitch \$30

_____ Veteran Bitch \$30

_____ BoS to BI Sweeps \$50

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Address

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To secure recognition in the Premium/Catalog, donations must be received no later than 14 November. Please make known the class you wish to sponsor in preferential order. All attempts at accommodating your request will be made. If you have no preference place an "X" in the no preference box.

First Choice Class Donation: _____

Second Choice Class Donation: _____

Third Choice Class Donation: _____

No Preference:

☐

Feel free to contact Christina Buckner via e-mail at: ckallay@verizon.net



PVIWC List of Meeting & Events 2025

January 12	Meeting
February 9	Meeting
March 2025	<u>St. Patrick's Day Parades</u>
• March 1	Alexandria, VA
• March 8	Manassas, VA
• March 9	Annapolis, MD
• March 15	Harrisburg, PA
• March 15	Gaithersburg, MD
• March 16	Baltimore, MD
March 29 & 30	Tell-Tale Steampunk Festival, 1726 Reisterstown Road, Pikesville, MD 21208
March 30 & 31	<i>Specialty Harford County Equestrian Center, Bel Air, MD</i>
April 11 & 12	Dills Celtic Festival, Dills Tavern, 227 N Baltimore St, Dillsburg, PA 17019
April 19 & 20	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Carolinas Specialty</i>
April 26	Southern MD Celtic Festival, Jefferson Patterson Park, 10515 Mackall Rd, St Leonard MD 20685
May 2 & 3	Annapolis Irish Festival, Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, 1450 Generals Hwy Crownsville, MD
May 3 & 4	Faerie Festival , Rocky Point Park, 2200 Rocky Point Rd, Essex, MD 21221
May 18	Show Wrap Up Meeting
May 25 - 29	<i>IWCA National Specialty Cache County Fairgrounds, Logan, UT</i>
June 14 & 15	Carroll County Celtic Festival, 706 Agriculture Center Dr, Westminster, MD 21157
June 8	Regular Meeting
June 21	Penn Mar Irish Festival, Pheasant Run Greenhouse, 10241 Brillhart Rd, Glen Rock, PA 17327
June 27 - 29	Celtic Fling (w/ a concert Friday night) Mt Hope Winery 2775 Lebanon Rd. Manheim, PA 17545
August 10	Regular Meeting
August	Oakenmist Ren Faire Howard County Fairgrounds, 2210 Fairgrounds Rd, West Friendship, MD
August 30 & 31	Virginia Scottish Games, 5089 Old Tavern Road, The Plains, VA 20198
September 21	Fun Day
September	PA Renn Faire Shamrocks and Shenanigans, Mt Hope Winery 2775 Lebanon Rd. Manheim, PA 17545
October 5 & 6	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Delaware Valley Specialty</i>
October 19	Regular Meeting
November	Lá Gaeilge (Irish Day), Front Royal, VA
November 7 - 9	Maryland Irish Festival, 2200 York Rd, Timonium, MD 21093
November 16	Regular Meeting
December 14	Holiday Party Montgomery's
December	Druid Hill Winter Solstice 5Miler, 1 Safari Place, Baltimore, MD 21217
December	Military Bowl Parade, Annapolis, MD

Dates, Time, or location to be determined and subject to change on some events.

Need Volunteers to Host meetings.