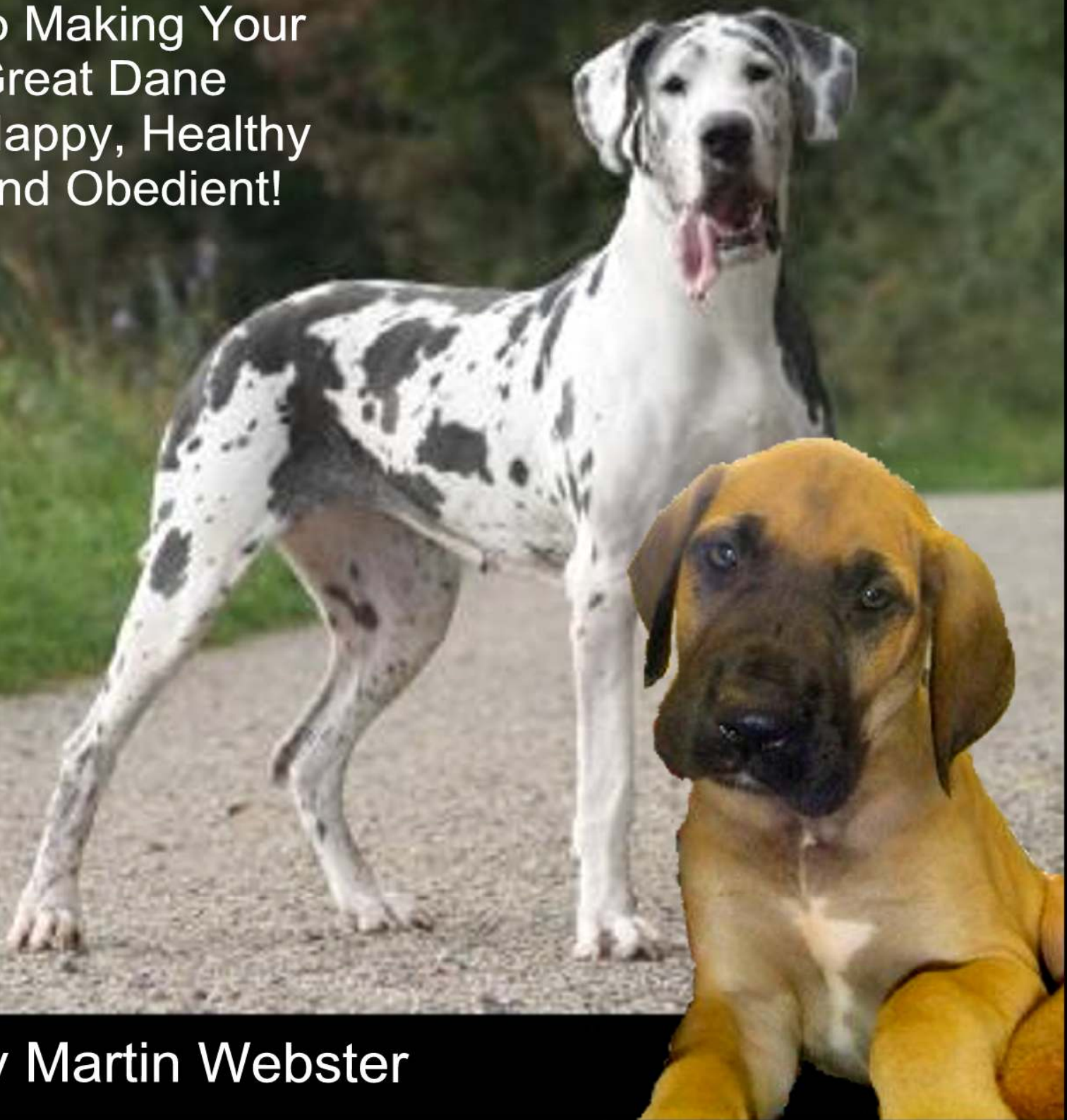


# Great Dane Secrets

The Ultimate Guide  
to Making Your  
Great Dane  
Happy, Healthy  
and Obedient!



by Martin Webster

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# Introduction

The Great Dane is a spirited, courageous, bold, friendly, dependable, and enormous dog. They have a certain royal majesty above others. But what is it about the Great Dane that makes its breed so special and unique? That's what my ebook "Great Dane Secrets" is here to do - teach you the interesting facts and tips that are associated with loyal and happy natured Great Danes.

Now you might be thinking, "So what, another dog book...what makes this one so great?" My answer to you is plain and simple, "Great Dane Secrets" is comprised of careful and extensive research provided from experts and dog lovers just like you, who have not only done their homework, but have actually enjoyed the experience of raising a Great Dane as a part of their family.

In order to create this ebook I carefully conducted months of research, and collected information from numerous Great Dane enthusiasts and owners, learning from their tips and individual experiences.

In addition to this information I discovered other important facts from different Great Dane books I purchased from the local bookstore, as well as using helpful internet resources where I was able to find and read an abundance of articles and forum posts, which provided me with the opportunity to compare notes and consider further information.

I can tell you that this was certainly a lot of work, but work that truly paid off in the end. Not only did I learn everything there is to know about Great Danes, but I was able to compile this ebook to share with you all of the fascinating information to help you improve upon the quality of your Great Dane's life, ensuring that it is kept healthy, strong, active and happy.

Enjoy "Great Dane Secrets", and look forward to sharing many wonderful years with your dog.

Martin Webster  
April 2005



# Great Dane Dogs At A Glance

Great Danes are a fabulous breed definitely deserving its huge popularity (pun intended). Spirited, courageous, always friendly and dependable, Great Danes are excellent with children, loyal to the family, as they are with other dogs and household pets. Though they are not kennel dogs – they are capable of protection, are intelligent, large, and have a majestic atmosphere about them that no other breed possesses.

Great Danes are muscular, massive, gentle dogs that are respectful, dignified and playful with children.

On the image of money, dating back to 36 B.C., there is a dog very similar to the Great Dane of today. The Great Dane is known as the "Apollo of all dogs." In 407 A.D. German Gaul and part of Italy and Spain were invaded by an Asiatic people (the Alans), who brought with them powerful mastiff-like dogs. In Germany, where these magnificent animals were capable of overcoming bears and wild boars were much admired, selective breeding begun. They were crossed with Irish Greyhounds to promote the beautiful, large, thin, agile dog known today as the Great Dane. Though they are called Danes in English (French "grand Danois", meaning "Big Danish"), they have nothing to do with Denmark. Some of the Great Dane's talents are tracking, watchdog and carting.

Great Danes do not bark much, but only become aggressive when the situation requires it. They love people, and although are great housedogs, they do require a lot of exercise.

Being a great watchdog, they are steady, loyal and dependable. They are also very sensitive, although this should help in training them at an early age.

Our 4 Paw Rating - to the suitability of Great Danes for your home and lifestyle:

## Size 🐾🐾🐾

Shoulder height up to 30-36 inches, weight 100 lbs or more.

## Coat Care 🐾🐾🐾

Short, smooth, thick, clean and with a glossy appearance.

## Family Life 🐾🐾🐾🐾

A quiet dog inside, they require plenty of human companionship. Though they are very calm and quiet, they do not have a sense of their size, and will attempt

to sit in your lap or on the couch, with their front legs on the floor. Be careful with small children around them.

### Lifestyle 🐾🐾🐾🐾

Great Danes will easily become couch potatoes if not exercised. Long daily walks are best.

### Health 🐾🐾🐾

Life expectancy is 7-10 years, though known to live 12-15 years. Be wary of bloat (gastric torsion), Hypothyroidism and Wobbler's Syndrome.

### Exercise 🐾🐾🐾🐾

Great Danes need plenty of exercise; long walks are best.

### Training 🐾🐾🐾🐾

Great Danes are easy to train, learn quickly, are eager to please and love to work





# What Is A Great Dane?

Great Dane's are the Gentle Giants.

The Great Dane is a wonderful family companion if you want a large, affectionate short-haired breed who also offers protection due to his suspicious attitude toward strangers.

The Great Dane is a gentle, grand and elegant dog. Throughout history it has been trained as a:

- guard dog
- hunting dog
- carting dog

The American Kennel Club (AKC) categorizes dogs into 7 groups:

- herding
- hound
- non-sporting
- sporting
- terrier
- toy
- working

The Great Dane is recognized as a sporting dog (or gundog in the Kennel Club of the United Kingdom), which is considered to be one of the most intelligent breeds due to the fact that they are essentially easy to train for a number of uses.

Aside from their natural instincts, Danes are blessed with a beautiful temperament that makes them the perfect family dog or loyal friend.

Devoted and pleased owners of Great Danes have come up with a long list of attributes and traits of their favorite pet that include:

- Eager to Please
- Regal
- Happy
- Alert
- Brave
- Courageous
- Devoted
- Dignified
- Exuberant
- Family dog

- Companion
- Fearless
- Friendly
- Huge
- Highly trainable
- Intuitive
- Majestic
- Loving
- Loyal
- Patient with children
- People dog
- Excellent swimmer
- Playful
- Self-assured
- Smart
- Soulful
- Spirited
- Stoical
- Vigilant
- Working dog
- Sporting dog
- Wonderful pet

And you can add to the list...

### Great Dane history

The Great Dane is one of the most elegant and distinguished of the giant breeds. It is believed that their origins can be traced to Irish Wolfhound with mixture of old English Mastiff. The breed has existed for over 400 years to serve as a Boar Hound in Germany. Europe's erstwhile boar was one of the most savage, swift, powerful and well armed requiring a "superdog" to hunt it.

The Royal Courts and great houses of Germany boasted enormous kennels of these great hunting dogs. It was during the 17th and 18th centuries that serious breeding plans were instituted. There was less importing from other countries; records were starting to be kept, and certain stud dogs were starting to gain fame. However, just as these very large scale breeding plans took shape, they brought with it a huge decline in the numbers of wild game for which the dogs had been needed in recent years. So while some strict breeding rules and records were in place, many entire kennels died out completely.

Maybe more than any other, the Great Dane has had his name changed. In the 16th century the Dane was often known as the "English Dogges." The dog known as the Deutsche Dogge in Germany, borrowed the "dogge" part from the early English word "Dogca." The English word "dog" had been known in England

since 1050 and later when adopted by the Germans, was written as "dock". The English changed the "dogca" to "dog" and it became known to the Dutch and French as "dogue."

In 1863, the first dog show was held in Hamburg. It was noted that "some very grave looking Doggen took part." Of these "grave looking Doggen", 8 were called Danish Doggen and 7 as Ulmer Doggen. The Czar of Russia even purchased two of them. From then on many Ulmer Doggen and Danish Doggen appeared regularly at German dog shows. The judges of the time were upset by the failure to arrive at one name for the breed, and declared them the "Deutsche Dogge." During the following years, many breeds were still known by different names according to their size or color. In 1880, at a meeting of the current breed fancy, it was officially given his name in Germany of "Deutsche Doggen." In France it was known as the Grand Danois, and in England as the German Mastiff. In Denmark, they were known as the Great Danish Dog.

In 1891, the Great Dane Club of Germany adopted a standard or official description of the breed. In 1889 in Chicago, the German Mastiff or Great Dane Club of America was founded with G. Muss-Arnoldt as first delegate. Two years later the club reorganized as the Great Dane Club of America.

### Regal and giant dog

Great Danes are from 30-36 inches in height, and range in weight from males (120-200 pounds) and females at 100-130 pounds.

Their heads are rectangular, long, distinguished, expressive, finely chiseled, especially below the eyes. Their eyes are of medium size, deep set, generally dark, and with a lively intelligent glow.

Their ears are high set, medium in size, moderate in thickness, and folded close to the cheek. The top line of the folded ear should be level with the skull. The ear length, if cropped, is in proportion to the size of the head. The ears are generally carried erect.

Teeth are strong and well developed. The lower jaws incisors touch the bottom of the inner surface of the upper incisors very lightly.

The neck is firm, high set, well arched, long and muscular. From the nape, it is broad. The neck underline should be clean. The chest is broad, deep and well muscled. The forechest is well developed, without a pronounced sternum. The brisket extends to the elbow, with well sprung ribs. The body underline is tightly muscled with a well-defined tuck-up.

The tail should be set high, but not quite level with the back. It should be broad at the base, tapering uniformly down to the hock joint. At rest, the tail should fall

straight. When excited or running, it may curve slightly, but never above the level of the back.

The Great Dane's coat is short, thick, clean and has a smooth, glossy appearance.

Their trademark is their look and temperament. They are spirited, courageous, majestic, friendly, dependable and never timid or aggressive.

Their average lifespan is 7-10 years.



## Great Danes As Pets

Considered to be the ideal dogs for families, Great Danes are a popular choice simply because they are active and loving to all - adults, children and other pets. However, like any dog, Great Danes need attention and the proper care in order for them to develop as a credit to their breed. If left to fend for themselves, they will not only become lonely, but will seek ways to get your attention through acts of mischief or destruction.

### How to keep your Great Dane from destroying things

Your Great Dane puppy will love to chew; any item it can get its little paws on is the latest "toy". To solve this problem, all you have to do is give your pup the love, attention and exercise it needs.

At least 3 times a day, make the effort to take your Great Dane out for a decent walk or run. Let it race around your backyard, and give your Great Dane puppy some quality playtime. Danes have a lot of energy; if you do not channel that energy into something productive (lots of exercise and playtime), your Dane will find ways to channel it himself. Danes do not chew to do harm; they chew because they need to expend their natural enthusiasm.

It doesn't take much to give your Great Dane the attention it needs, only your time and participation, which will certainly pay off when you gain a loving, faithful companion in your dog.

### What some proud owners say about their pet Great Danes

- \* "Great Dane dogs think they are human. Treat them like one - love them, talk to them, cuddle them and value them and you will get your love back unconditionally 10,000 times."
- \* "Great Danes are the most loyal companions. My Dane always knows how to make me happy when I'm down. Danes are the only dogs for me."
- \* "Danes are the greatest gift! The three I have are always happy and are forever putting me in a great mood. They are truly the best companions in the world."
- \* "Bringing a puppy or even an older dog into your home and your life is a major decision. It brings with it responsibility and commitment, but it also renders supreme joy, laughter, and sadly, but inevitably, tears. Not one of us who has ever shared his life with a Great Dane would have it any other way."

\* “My Great Dane always knows how I’m feeling, and is right by my side through the good and bad times”

\* I can tell my Dane anything, he is the best keeper of secrets”

\* “Danes love to chew; I never knew I could go through so many pairs of shoes in one month.”

\* “Nothing is more beautiful than watching a Great Dane when it is running free in the wild”

\*” There is nothing more I look forward to, then going home after a long day at work, to be greeted by my Dane who is so happy to see me and wants nothing more than to be loved back.”



## So Are You Ready For A Great Dane?

According to the American Kennel Club, 2002, the Great Dane is the 28<sup>th</sup> most popular dog in America. However, like any other dog, owning a Great Dane takes work, dedication and sometimes an awful lot of patience.

Although Danes are a beautiful breed, many of them end up back at the pound not even 6 months after they are taken in by a family, simply because the owners didn't take into perspective how much work the dog was going to be. That being the case, you need to understand that if you decide to make a Great Dane apart of your family, you are committing to train, love and maintain the health and care of the dog for a possible 12-15 years.

Therefore, before you get a Dane, there are some essential aspects you need to take into account, to decide if a Great Dane is really the dog for you.

### Great Danes crave attention

You are the center of your Danes world--they love unconditionally and want to always be with the ones they love. Whether puppy or fully matured adult, Danes are universally the same: they want to be with you. If you go outside, even if it is only to get the morning paper, they want to travel at your side.

Of course, it is impossible to bring your pet with you for every occasion. That is why it is important that you devote time to your Danes and lavish them with the affection they so crave. When you are home, spend quality time with your dog. For them, the only thing worse than being left alone is to be ignored when you are home.

It is also important to expose your Dane to the public, taking him to areas that are frequented by other people. This will encourage your Dane to be friendly toward others and keep him from becoming "unsocialized" (shy, overly timid, etc.).

And, finally, you must speak with your Dane. This will help appease his need for attention; after all, what better way to show affection than to constantly include your pet in the conversations? He may not understand the world but he will understand the sentiment.

### Great Danes love to chew

One owner says - "I almost lost my entire wardrobe to my Dane puppy. I can't believe how much he can chew and destroy in the course of a few hours."

With their strong jaws and natural inclination to hold things in their mouths, Danes are natural chewers. Accept this fact early on about your dog.

Since you will not be able to break your Dane are this habit, it is important to learn how to deal with it – with maturation and training, most Danes will grow out of the 'chewing phase' on their own. While you are waiting for this growth, you need to be prepared to lose certain household items: clothing, shoes, papers, books and furniture are particular pet favorites. To keep these items in tact and bite-mark free, give your Dane plenty of chew toys, affection and attention.

Be careful with what you leave on the floor if your puppy is an excessive chewer. Power cords or electrical cords are dangerous, as are small items that can get lodged in your puppy's throat. Take care to watch your floors for any potential risks.

### Great Danes are dirt magnets that shed

Due to the fact that Great Danes love the outdoors, you can expect that come rain or shine your Dane will be begging to get outside to run and explore all of the muddy puddles, dig or roll in the dirt, and dive into any pond, lake, creek or ocean. Therefore, you should expect your Dane to give off that charming "wet dog" smell, and leave foot prints on your floor.

To help with the odor and the muddy feet, wipe your Danes paws when he comes in from outside, and be sure to give him regular baths.

In addition, be advised, that although Great Danes only have short hair, they still shed an average amount. Be prepared to live with dog hair, and to vacuum or sweep frequently, as one owner says -

"It never ceases to amaze me how much my Dane sheds. I vacuum in the morning only to find at the end of the day that it looks like I hadn't vacuumed at all."

### Great Danes are guard dogs

As you are already aware, Great Danes are very family oriented and recognized as rather friendly dogs, and loves being around people, friends and strangers alike. Great Danes are guard dogs and will most likely need to be trained to behave properly around others.

Due to the fact that Great Danes are so friendly, they are prone to going up to greet complete strangers. Thus, you will find that without proper and strict training, Danes will be difficult to control if let them off their leash.



## Great Danes need exercise

You will need to take your Great Dane on a long daily walk at least. Several walks a day are best.

Though they do best in a park, a large open yard should suffice. They're a large dog, so they're relatively inactive indoors, and would've been taught to be as such. They are capable of great agility, but only if rigorously trained. It's up to your lifestyle and your Dane's energy level to determine what is desired.

If your Dane does not receive the exercise it needs daily, he will result to other ways of venting his frustrations and energies by tearing up your home.



# Choosing Your Great Dane

An easier and more pleasant journey with your chosen Great Dane starts with checking out the parent dogs for unbecoming traits like health problems such as hip dysplasia , interbreeding, or unbecoming features such as other color combinations beside yellow, black or chocolate, and height difference compared to the Standard.

This is an easier task to accomplish when you purchase your Great Dane from a reputable breeder or from select pet shops that obtain their animals only from known breeders.

Exercise prudence if you are getting your Great Dane puppy from pet stores, which often get their supply from breeders of unknown reputation.

These “puppy mills” as they are called, place little emphasis on the quality and health of the pups they are producing.

Reputable breeders would adhere to the accepted standards for Great Danes in terms of uniformity in the breed, good health, temperament, size and color.

Reputable breeders would be able to show the pedigree and registration papers and/or pictures of the parent dogs that may reside somewhere else.

Professional breeders are also there to produce dog show champions or prospects, which means that they are proud of the quality of their puppies.

In fact, even if you are not looking to raise a show champion Dane, known breeders can provide you with some “best buy” puppies because not all the puppies in a litter are show prospect/champion materials.

Nevertheless, the full litter would have had benefited from the same proven bloodlines, nutrition and medical care. So you can choose from among the good-looking brothers or sisters of a potential champion for a bargain.

There is nothing wrong with a bargain, but look at all bargains with a critical eye. Find out the reasons why the puppy in question is being sold at a lesser price. After all, it matters not how much you pay for the dog, as long as it saves you money in medical bills years later.

Besides reputable breeders, your other source option is animal shelters that in the US alone receive up to 12 million homeless dogs and cats every year, and about 25% of them are purebred. Paying the adoption fee is a lot cheaper than the price you will pay to a breeder or pet store, and you will be saving a life.

The definition of good stock or purebred must include beauty, and in a Great Dane good look means the coat is coarse and short with either yellow (beige to fox-red), Black or Brown (light to dark brown) coloring. The nose of the Dane should also have color and should not be overly pink or lacking pigment.

When it comes to choosing male or female Great Danes, there are very few differences in their personalities.

Both sexes of Great Danes are friendly, happy and playful and make good pets. However, female Danes frequently show a more independent nature than males. That being the case, a male Great Dane is more likely to stick by your side all the time, whereas a female will be close to you, but also enjoys her own space.

Regardless of your choice, you will find both sexes make fantastic companions.

Remember to keep these last few tips in mind when selecting your breeder:

1. The breeder should have extensive knowledge about the dog, and be able to tell you why they have an interest in breeding.
2. Is breeding in order to preserve the health and welfare of the dog
3. Is willing, and can answer any questions you may have
4. Will take the time to ask you lots of questions
5. Can provide you with the pedigree of the dog you are choosing, and answer why this particular pairing of dam and sire was their particular choice.
6. Will show you the mother or any of the other dogs or animals they have, which should all be in full health and be happy.
7. Is willing to take the dog back, if you find you don't want it or can't keep it.
8. Does not breed more than two types of breeds, and does not breed from one dog too frequently.



# Kennel Clubs And Great Dane Pedigrees

There are kennel clubs located in different countries that are devoted to maintaining the survival of purebred dogs, as well as hosting a number of dog shows, and various other events. The two best known clubs are those in the UK and the US.

## About the UK Kennel Club

Beginning in the spring of 1873, the UK Kennel Club has worked to benefit dogs by seeking to encourage improvements in their breeds. For instance, their website is devoted to providing dog owners with ideal information that will help them to better understand how to properly care for their dogs, as well as giving detailed facts about every breed.

Currently the UK Kennel Club recognizes 196 different dog breeds, has over 1500 members registered, and hosts a number of different dog competitions and events.

## About the American Kennel Club

The American Kennel Club was founded in 1884, and is a non-profit organization that works to encourage owners to understand the responsibilities of owning a dog, endorses dog events, and maintains a registry devoted to purebred dogs.

Their website provides detailed information regarding numerous purebreds that can be found in the 7 dog categories as listed on page 10 of this ebook.

The American Kennel Club does not sell dogs, and is proud to sponsor over 15,000 competitions for dogs every year that are held by the ACK members or licensed clubs.

The American Kennel Club also encourages and supports purebred dogs as a sport.

## Great Dane pedigrees

You may be interested in learning the individual heritage of your dog to discover if there are any champions in your dog's lineage. This ancestral lineage of your dog is what is known as its pedigree.

The basic starting point, when distinguishing the Great Dane pedigree, is to

separate them by coloring – 1) Fawn and Brindle, 2) Harlequin, Mantle and Harlequin Bred Black, 3) Blue and Blue Bred Black, 4) Black. However, this is only one small step in the discovery of your dog's individual heritage, as you will also need to know your dog's phenotype.

For instance, when you adopted your Dane, he or she should have come with information that classified them with particular genetic characteristics. The following is a list of some Great Dane phenotypes:

- **Black:**  $A^s a^y BBCCDdEEmmSSww$
- **Black:**  $A^s A^s BbCCDDE^m EmmSSww$
- **Liver or Chocolate:**  $A^s A^s bbCCDDEEmmSSww$
- **Masked Fawn:**  $a^y a^y BBCCDDE^m E^m mmSSww$
- **Harlequin:**  $A^s A^s BBCCDDEEMms^i Ww$
- **Masked Dilute Brindle:**  $a^y a^y BBCCddE^m E^{br} mmSSww$

As you can see, there are many different genetic types of Great Danes to be considered when it comes to identifying the specific pedigree that is connected to your dog.

You also may not have realized it, but your Dane's body structure and features say a lot about his particular pedigree that can be traced back to a number of sires and dams throughout the years.



# Great Danes And Your Family

Great Danes are like a guardian family dog and nothing pleases them more than to be around people. They crave companionship, and are therefore easy to treat as a member of the family.

In order for a Great Dane to be happy all they need is love and attention, which means that they can adapt to just about any environment as long as there are people around for them to play and interact with.

Because they are social dogs, Danes hate to be left alone. Though it will, sometimes, be impossible to include them in your outings, you should try to make them a part of as much of your life as possible.

Since Danes are sensitive dogs who try to balance their own happiness with yours, be careful with punishment. Discipline does not equal physical punishment. Never hit your Dane.

As you train and teach your Great Dane, you and your dog will become fonder of one another and gain an understanding and friendship, providing you with an additional member of the family that wants nothing more than to be loved and spend time with all of you.

## Great Danes and kids

Great Danes are fond of children and love to play with them, however, keep in mind that your dog must be *taught* how to play gently with children, just as your children should be *taught* to understand how to play with the dog.

For instance, if your child is under the age of five, you should not leave them unsupervised to play with the Dane, as the child could unintentionally harm the dog, or vice versa.

Adult Danes are so large, that licking a child may knock them over (some kids think this is great.) Great Danes must be taught not to lean again

It is also a good idea to keep your Dane and child separate when it comes to snack or eating time, as there is a good chance the dog will snatch the food from the child, which is not something you will want your Dane to learn.

And although there is a time for playing, there is also a time when Danes need their space from children. If your dog is seeking some "alone" time, identify a room in your house, or use a proper sized dog crate that he can seek sanctuary in, and explain to your child that when he is in his own special place it's time for them to let the dog rest.

As long as you teach your kids and the dog to respect each others space and learn how to play with one another, you will discover that your Great Dane and kids will love growing, playing and spending time together.



# Great Dane Expenses

If you're thinking of getting a Great Dane, be sure to budget for more than just the adoption fee or pet-store cost of your new pet. From supplies, to health care, to regular monthly expenses, you should have the whole picture of dog expenses in mind when you make this decision.

That's not to say you need to be a millionaire. Truth is, most people who want a Great Dane can make it fit their budget and lifestyle. But by thinking ahead about what you'll need money for and by researching those costs, you can make a better informed decision when choosing your dog.

Naturally, costs vary from place to place and from person to person. Some people might want all the latest gadgets and conveniences; others just want the basics. We can't tell you exactly how much a Great Dane will cost you when all is said and done, but we can tell you a few things you'll need so you can research costs in your area yourself.

## Start-up costs

Here is a checklist of the start-up costs and items most often needed by new Great Dane owners. You should have these necessities on hand before you bring your dog home.

- The cost of your Great Dane, which will vary depending on whether you obtain him from a pet store, a breeder or from a Humane Society or rescue group
- Vaccinations and first veterinarian visit – If you're getting an adult Great Dane, these costs may be less, but you should go in for an initial check-up
- Collar – a non-tightening collar is perfect for puppies
- Leash - two of different lengths, long and short
- Food and water bowls - stainless steel or ceramic are best as bacteria can thrive on plastic bowls
- Grooming supplies - including brush, nail clippers, shampoo
- Cleaning supplies - your puppy or dog may have some accidents at first



- Dog bed or blanket – Choose between a nest or pillow bed
- Crate
- A supply of quality food
- Chew toys
- Dog tags
- Dog training classes – recommended for puppies or dogs that need additional training
- Spaying or neutering, if not done already
- Ongoing Expenses

Every month, you will need to budget for food. It's worth mentioning that, obviously, large dogs eat a lot of food.

### Veterinarian visits

Great Dane puppies may need up to 6 or more visits their first year; ask your veterinarian for an estimate of costs. Adult Great Danes should have an annual checkup unless your veterinarian suggests more.

It's a good idea to have a little money available for emergencies. Like people, dogs can have accidents and illnesses that may require a hospital visit.

Other Possible Expenses

### Other items

There are also some optional supplies you might want to consider. These may be necessities in some cases - for example, a dog house is needed if your dog won't be sleeping inside - but you'll have to decide which of these items fit your lifestyle and budget.

- Fence
- Outside kennel
- Dog house
- Doggie door
- Gates - to block off certain rooms or staircases indoors

- Anti-chew spray
- Boots - an option for dogs in snowy areas or who are going to do a lot of walking over rough ground
- Grooming table

### More on dog houses

Great Danes can be happy indoors or outdoors, provided their needs are addressed. A mixture suits most Great Danes well because they are happiest when they are with you, but they enjoy time outside as well.

If you need to leave your Great Dane outside, a doghouse is a good idea, remember.

- Great Danes are den animals. They like a small, confined, safe spot for naps and hanging out. Various designs are available or you can build your own.
- Make it big enough for your Great Dane, but not too big because heat escapes in a large space. Buy or build one that will be big enough for your grown dog, but while your puppy is growing, block off the extra space with boxes or a sheet of wood. Keep the occupied space appropriate for your dog's size.
- Insulate against both the heat and the cold. The shelter of a roof and walls will protect your Great Dane from the wind and sun, but use flaps for airflow in the summer and some kind of insulation against the cold air.
- Set or build it off the ground. Raising the doghouse even a few inches will block the cold air rising from the earth and will give added airflow in the hot months. It also helps prevent rotting and keeps water from seeping in.

With a little research, you should be able to find a way to make these expenses fit your needs. And if you have this planning out of the way before you get your Great Dane, you'll have more worry-free time to enjoy spending with the newest member of your family.



## Great Dane Beds

When it comes to comfort, nothing will make your Great Dane happier than having their very own dog bed that they can relax, sleep on and enjoy.

There are three basic styles of dog beds that you can consider, and can be found at local pet stores and online:

1. Nest Beds
2. Pillows
3. Specialty Beds (special shaped, orthopedic, thermal, bolster etc.)

If you are interested in purchasing a bed for your Great Dane, you will need to make sure that you select a bed that is a size extra large large. Extra large size nest beds are 28"x43", while pillows are 45"-52". As for specialty beds, these beds will vary depending on their shape and size.

When selecting the bed for your Great Dane it is a good idea to purchase ones that are durable, made of good quality and are machine washable. You will find they come in a variety of colors and patterns, so it shouldn't be hard to pick out the bed that should suit both you and your Great Dane.

One owner said - "My Great Dane loves his Bolster bed. It's the perfect size, and is his very own mini floor couch that gives him ideal comfort. It's his favorite resting spot, and was worth every penny."



## ID Tags And Registration

Nobody wants to think about losing his or her Great Dane. But, unfortunately, dogs do get lost. Be prepared. Buy your Great Dane a collar and some form of identification.

Identification tags are a popular and easy way to identify your Great Dane. There are abundant options in colors, shapes, and sizes to fit your dog's needs and personality.

The problem with tags is that they can fall off or be removed. Two permanent methods are the microchip and the tattoo.

### Microchips

Contained in a capsule, the microchip is a small chip coded with your contact information or an ID number. About the size of a grain of rice, it's injected under your pet's skin with a needle, a procedure no more uncomfortable than a regular shot.

Your information is then put into a national database so if your puppy is lost, identification is easy. Lost pets may be taken to the humane society or animal shelter for scanning identification. It's not as easy as reading a tag on a collar, but it cannot be lost. It's safe, effective, and meets international standards. Check with your local animal shelter or veterinarian for costs and more information.

It's important to keep your contact information current. When you move or change phone numbers, update your registration data.

The only drawbacks to these chips are that not every place has the scanner equipment and the chip may move (harmlessly) around your Great Dane's body, making it difficult to scan.

### Tattoos

A tattoo contains a number that you register with one of the national databases. It can be put on your Great Dane's inner thigh or earflap. Wait until your dog is fully-grown so the numbers won't grow out of shape. Be sure to tattoo on an area that won't be covered by fur as your Great Dane's coat matures. It's a simple and quick procedure, but check it periodically for fading. Don't forget to register the number and to keep the contact information current.



# Dog Proofing Your Home

Before bringing your Great Dane home, you'll need to 'dogproof' your house. Here's a simple checklist to make sure your home is safe before letting your dog run free.

## **Make sure all poisonous household items are securely stored out of reach**

Put household cleaners, laundry detergents, bleach, disinfectants, insecticides, cleaning fluid, fertilizers, mothballs, antifreeze, insect poisons, rat poisons and other items in cabinets or on high shelves. Read about Home Safety.

## **Check your plants**

Many plants in and around your house can be harmful to your Great Dane. Did you know that the pits of apricots and peaches, as well as spinach and tomato vines, can make your dog sick and, in large dosages, can even be fatal? Read about Poisonous Plants. You will find a list in "The Dog Lover Guide".

## **Look at your house from your Great Dane's point of view**

Get down on all fours and look around. Move or remove dangling electric cords, loose nails, plastic bags or other tempting objects that will be in reach.

Pick up buttons, string, sewing needles, pins and other sharp objects, and anything small enough to swallow

If your Great Dane swallows any of these objects, they may cause damage to the mouth and internal organs. String and other entangling objects, such as curtain pulls, six-pack holders and the like may cause abrasions or strangulation.

## **Keep your toilet lid down**

Great Danes are often tempted to play in or drink toilet bowl water. This habit can be very hard to break. It's unsanitary and toilet cleanser may be harmful if swallowed.

## **Unplug, remove or cover any electrical cords in your dog's confinement area**

Chewing on these cords can cause severe mouth burns, electrocution and fires.

## Close off balconies, upper porches and high decks

Great Dane Puppies in particular are so little that they can slip through openings and fall.

In the last few days before arrival, give your house a good cleaning and remove breakable items from areas where your dog will be. Also, spend some time preparing yourself or your family. Small children need to know how to act around puppies and dogs.



## Home Safety

To a curious and creative Great Dane, anything can be a potential toy, treat or prize. But there are many things in the home that can be harmful to your dog. Learning to identify and remove those things from your dog's reach is an important part of creating a safe home for your Great Dane.

**Potential Hazard – Cleaners:** Includes household cleaners, bleach, detergents, dryer sheets, soap and more. All of these can have varying levels of toxicity or may burn if touched or consumed.

**What You Can Do** – Keep all cleaners sealed in their bottles. Store the bottles out of reach or in a latched cabinet. Remember, some dogs can open normal cabinets.

**Potential Hazard – Chemicals:** Includes automotive fluids, ESPECIALLY antifreeze (which is highly toxic yet very sweet), fertilizers, weed killers, moth balls, oven cleaners and more. These are often extremely toxic.

**What You Can Do** – Keep any household or automotive chemicals locked away in cabinets or storage areas. If these chemicals are in the garage, don't leave your dog in the garage unsupervised.

**Potential Hazard - Foil, Plastic Wrap and Insulation:** Materials like these often have tempting food particles or grease on them, but shred quickly and are easily swallowed. Any of these materials can cause serious internal problems, especially insulation, which is often made with fiberglass.

**What You Can Do** – Don't leave foil, wrap, insulation or similar materials lying around the house. If you use foil or wrap in the kitchen, throw it away someplace your dog cannot reach. If installing insulation or doing construction, clean up all scraps.

**Potential Hazard – Pest Control:** Bug traps, rodent traps, foggers, insecticides

– even your dog’s own flea medicine. All of these are designed to kill or trap, and can cause harm to your dog. Insect traps are often sweet, which is an extra temptation.

**What You Can Do** – Store these items in a locked or latched cabinet. If you have to leave insect traps out, make sure they’re in places your dog can’t get at them.

**Potential Hazard – Drugs:** Whether over the counter or prescription, or even your dog’s own prescriptions, drugs can cause serious problems in the case of an overdose. And don’t assume that ‘mild’ drugs are OK – even aspirin can cause serious problems.

**What You Can Do:** Keep all medications in sealed containers away from your dog’s reach. NEVER self-medicate your dog. Only give drugs to your dog as instructed by a veterinarian.

**Potential Hazard – Chocolate:** This sweet treat can be toxic even in relatively small amounts. A half-ounce of baking chocolate or less per pound of dog can be toxic.

**What You Can Do** – Don’t give your dog chocolate. Keep it out of reach, and don’t leave it out where your dog can reach it.

**Potential Hazard – Plants:** Many household plants are bad for dogs and can cause problems ranging from stomach upsets to much more serious consequences. For a list, see our information on Poisonous Plants.

**What You Can Do** – Review the list of poisonous plants and make sure none of those plants are in places where your dog can reach them. Supervise your dog when you introduce a new plant to make sure your dog isn’t tempted to take a bite.

**Potential Hazard – Wires:** While they seem like fun toys, wires that carry a current can electrocute a dog if chewed. Even non-connected wires are troublesome – if swallowed, they can cause internal damage.

**What You Can Do** – Keep cords for lamps and other devices as short as possible. If you have to use extension cords, tack them to the baseboard so they’re harder to chew.

**Potential Hazard – Sharp Objects:** Knives, forks, paper clips and sharp bits of plastic are among the hazards often found in the house. They can be swallowed and cause unseen harm, or a romping dog could suffer cuts or punctures.

**What You Can Do** – Keep these items away from you dog. If you see your dog chewing such an item, get it out of his mouth immediately.

**Potential Hazard – Universal Dangers:** There are, of course, many other dangers that apply to humans as well as dogs. Falls, carbon monoxide poisoning, lead paint – if it can harm a person, it most likely can harm a dog.

**What You Can Do** – Keep your house as safe as you would for a child. And remember – dogs won't grow up and learn not to do certain things. Keeping a safe home is a lifelong commitment.



## First Aid

Accidents happen. When one happens to your dog, you may need to perform some first aid to stabilize or comfort your pet until you can get to professional help. Remember, first aid should not be the only aid your Great Dane receives.

### In an emergency

In an emergency, keep a level head and get your dog to the veterinarian quickly. Call first. If your doctor's office is not open, call the nearest emergency pet clinic. Keep emergency phone numbers near your telephone.

Some quick tips on common injuries and issues:

**General Injuries:** Wrap your dog in a heavy towel or blanket to keep him warm and restrict his movements.

**Not Breathing:** Unless you have been trained to administer CPR, it is best and safest to seek immediate veterinary care. (If you want to learn pet CPR, ask your veterinarian to recommend a program in your area.)

**Bleeding:** Apply a pressure bandage (sterile gauze or a handkerchief) to stem or stop bleeding.

**Burn:** Apply a cold compress or ice to a burn and gently hold it there until you get to the clinic.

**Poison:** Call your veterinarian or poison control immediately to determine if vomiting should be induced.

**Choking:** At any sign of choking (drooling, difficulty swallowing, pawing at the mouth, gagging) don't attempt to remove the item.

**Heatstroke:** Take your dog to a cool spot and sponge him with cold water.



Encourage him to drink small amounts of water.

**Frostbite:** Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws and ear tips so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

**Fever:** Check your dog's temperature. If it's above 103° degrees, get to your veterinarian for medication or advice. Read about taking your dog's temperature

**In ALL Cases:** It's worth repeating: Get to your veterinarian. Even small cuts can become big problems due to infection, and there can be internal injuries you can't see and your dog can't tell you about.

### First aid kit

Having some supplies ready in case of an emergency is a good idea. You won't have to go searching for what you need at a time of crisis. There's no need to replicate a veterinary hospital, but these basic items will come in helpful.

- Antibiotic ointment for cuts and scrapes
- A rectal thermometer – your dog's separate from everyone else's
- Tweezers – to remove thorns, stingers, splinters
- Wrap-style bandages and padding
- A blanket or large towel to wrap your dog



# Your Great Danes First Week Home

When you bring home a new Great Dane or puppy, there will need to be some time for adjustment. By following these tips, you can lay the foundation for a long and happy life together and make the transition as easy as possible for everyone involved.

## Plan ahead

Make all your purchases ahead of time so you have supplies, food, toys and everything you need ready to go, and have your house ready for your newcomer. Read about items you need to have and how to prepare your home.

## Make time

The best time to bring your new Great Dane home is at the beginning of a weekend. If possible, add a few vacation days. This gives you time to acquaint your dog with its new home and begin houstraining and other training.

## Choose a name

Agree on a name ahead of time and make sure everyone uses it all the time when talking to your Great Dane. This will help him recognize his name and avoid confusion.

## See the Veterinarian

As soon as possible after you acquire your new Great Dane, take your new pet to your veterinarian. Bring any immunization information you may have received when you acquired your pet to your veterinarian to begin a case history for future reference.

## Get everyone on board

Once in his new home, remember that your Great Dane is adjusting to strange new surroundings and people. Children can become especially excited. Explain to them that their new friend needs time out for naps. Show children how to play nicely.

## Be a leader

Simple things like always walking through doors ahead of your Great Dane and eating in your Great Dane's presence before you feed him make you look like a 'pack leader.' This will make it easier for your dog to accept that you (and your

family) are in charge.

### Feed your Great Dane

It is best to bring home the pet food that your new Great Dane has been eating to make the transition to a new home as easy as possible. New sights, new environment and all the attention can be very stressful. The only familiar thing may be the food he has been eating. If you plan to switch foods, you can minimize digestive upsets by having enough of the old food available to make the change a gradual one. Place food in the spot where the food dish will be kept to set a routine. If your Great Dane doesn't seem to be eating, try moistening the food with water to make it easier to eat.

### Be fair

Never hit your Great Dane. Never scold for something your puppy did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think that you are mad for no reason. Instead, encourage the behavior you want and prevent the ones you do not. It's a much more productive approach. Learn more about behavior issues and how to address them.

### Get out

Begin socializing your Great Dane puppy as soon as your veterinarian gives the OK. Take him out and gradually introduce him to new people and other dogs in controlled, safe settings. It is one of the most important things you can do for him. It teaches him to be a good citizen and gives him confidence and social skills.

### Make introductions

Introduce your new Great Dane to resident pets in controlled situations – if the resident pet is a dog, perhaps on neutral ground where neither will feel the need to defend territory. Give each pet its own food dish, and give all pets attention to avoid competition.

### Do's and don'ts

Avoid bringing home a new Great Dane during busy times such as birthdays and holidays. The noise and confusion may frighten the pet. Family members are generally too busy with the festivities to devote adequate time to help your dog become comfortable in his new home.

Do make sure your entire family knows how to act, and agree on commands and rules. Complete cooperation of all family members is ideal. When a Great Dane

receives mixed signals, it can become confused and not know what to do.

Do have fun. Great Danes of all ages love a good time.



# Choosing A Name For Your Great Dane

Coming up with a name for your new Great Dane is never easy. Do you keep a family tradition? Bend to the latest fashion? Honor a hero? Or come up with something wacky and altogether new?

A name can say a lot. Take Fido. The name is a classic "dog" name - but why? The name goes back to the Latin "fides" which meant "trustworthiness" or "protection." It's also the root of words like "fidelity" and "confidante."

Some starting points for this discussion can be historical figures, family members, mythical figures, qualities of your Great Dane (his temperament or coloring), characters from books, film, or television or anything else that you might have an interest in.

Here are a few suggestions:

## Keep it simple

One to three syllables is usually about right. Time can be of the essence when you're calling your dog; calling out a complicated name can slow things down and simply become tiresome.

## It shouldn't rhyme with your negative words

If you say "No" to your dog, you may want to skip names like Flo or Joe as they can sound a bit too close to "No".

## Choose a name you really like

You're going to be saying it for up to the next fifteen years, if you're lucky. So take your time and select something you'll enjoy saying for the next decade or more.

## Make it his word

Use his name when you speak to your puppy. Reward him with affection and a kibble or two when he hears it and soon he will come running when he hears his special word.



# Socializing Your Great Dane

Socialization is an ongoing process throughout your Great Dane's life, but the most critical period is before six months of age. Quite literally, socialization means making your dog sociable.

Socializing your Great Dane puppy means providing quality time. Give him lots of attention and affection. Pet him and call him by his chosen name. Introduce him to your neighbors and "service people" such as the mail carrier and others who come to your home regularly. Show children how to pet him.

Socializing your puppy to other dogs is important, but this does not mean letting him run free in the neighborhood. Give your puppy the opportunity for safe, controlled interaction with dogs whose owners you know and be sure the dogs are immunized. For a Great Dane puppy, this includes introducing him in happy ways to all sorts of people, places and things. Here are a few things you can do:

- Go to training classes
- Visit dog-loving friends
- Take your puppy on errands with you in temperate weather. (As always, never leave your dog in the car in warm weather. It can become unbearably hot quickly.)
- Invite people over to your house

Socialization isn't about forcing your puppy into scary situations but rather about creating pleasant associations with new events and faces. Things to keep in mind:

- What a Great Dane puppy learns early in life stays with him for life.
- Between one month and three months old, a Great Dane puppy gets almost all of his adult sensory, motor and learning abilities.
- The more loving interaction you have with your Great Dane, the better.
- Include a little work in your play times and a lot of play in your work times. Make learning fun!

As soon as your veterinarian says it is safe, introduce him to the sights and sounds of his world. Make this fun by praising him and giving him a kibble when he explores his world.

## Grooming

Grooming and handling daily throughout your Great Dane's life help make him a calmer, better-behaved, more tolerant companion. Make grooming a special time for you and your dog. Whether he needs it or not, brush him daily with much affection and reassurance so he learns to love this time together.

## Handling his paws, tail, ears and mouth.

When your Great Dane puppy is tired, gently handle his paws, look in his ears, and open his mouth. Use your finger to gently massage his gums. This prepares him for having his teeth brushed. Praise him warmly when he allows these things. Get him used to all this early and grooming him later in life will be easier.

## Feeding

Utilize every opportunity to socialize your Great Dane puppy. Make feeding time a happy experience by praising your puppy for being a good dog as you place his dish on the floor. Considerable puppy-owner bonding can occur through positive feeding experiences.

Feeding can also aid in training your puppy. As you place his food dish on the floor, give the command, 'Come.' This introduces your puppy to an obedience command in a very positive way.

As you socialize and train your puppy, remember that puppies are eager to please. Reward your puppy for good behavior by praising him. A little praise goes a long way in helping your Great Dane puppy become an endearing companion.



# Great Dane Intelligence

Great Dane intelligence can be measured several ways: how well or how quickly your dog can understand your meaning, figure out ways around obstacles or recognize people and things. But intelligence should not be confused with being a good companion. Smart does not always equal trainable. A smart Great Dane might very well understand you but still choose to do something else.

The important quality of a companion dog is that he wants to please you. After all, most basic training involves conditioning your Great Dane to listen to a command, but doesn't require that your dog 'understand' the command in the way a person does.

Some signs of intelligence are easy to spot. For example, watch how your Great Dane uses his paws. Using paws to reach for or retrieve a ball that has rolled under a couch is one sign of intelligence.

One popular test is to show your Great Dane a new toy, then set it on the floor and cover it with a towel. Great Danes of above-average intelligence will make the connection between the towel and the toy and look for their toy. Other Great Danes will think the toy simply disappeared and never look for it.

Evidence of memory can be seen in how your Great Dane greets people he has met before. A Great Dane with a stronger memory will not need to go back through the introduction process and will become comfortable with the visitor quickly.

Wherever your Great Dane falls on the intelligence scale, remember that intelligence is developed through practice, just as it can be in humans. The more involved your Great Dane is in your life, the more time you spend training and working with your dog, the more intelligent he's likely to be.

And regardless of intelligence, the important thing to know is that your Great Dane wants to please you. Unless you really need or want a dog that can figure out how to open the refrigerator, intelligence can be overrated. For most families, the qualities to look for are gentle, tolerant and devoted - those are what make a family dog one-in-a-million.





# Understanding Great Dane Puppies

Your Great Dane puppy is a pack animal, and he still follows the call of the wild. Your family is your puppy's pack. Who will be the leader and who will be the follower?

There are some ways to set yourself and your family up as top dog. You want to earn your puppy's respect. That can mean being firm, but always fair.

Great Dane puppies do feel fear, but it's not useful for your dog to fear you.

## **Never hit your dog**

Great Dane puppies don't have the ability to link cause and effect abstractly; that is, remember a past action and link it to your present reaction. Never scold for something your puppy did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think that you are mad for no reason. Only correct your Great Dane when caught in the act.

Because Great Dane puppies are pack animals, they crave your attention and approval. Use this to your advantage when teaching your Great Dane.

Take the time to teach your Great Dane puppy what you want. A puppy arrives in our world, often having just been born two or three months earlier. We should not expect him to understand anything but to love us. We get to teach him the rest - using persistence, patience and affection to shape him into the companions that we want and he is capable of becoming.

## **Your Great Dane puppy's senses**

When you notice the way your Great Dane puppy reacts in situations, remember that Great Danes live in a world that looks, smells and sounds quite a bit different than ours. You might think a situation seems quiet and safe, but your Great Dane may sense something you do not that causes agitation - a sound too high-pitched for you to hear or the scent of another animal you can't detect.

Great Danes can see with less light, detect motion, and see flickering light better than humans, but the clarity of their distance vision is typically poorer. The popular theory that dogs only see shades of gray may not be true. Some theories suggest they see blues and yellows but can't see reds and greens as humans do.

A Great Dane's hearing is more sensitive than yours. They hear higher pitches and lower volumes. Great Danes are able to register sounds of 35,000 vibrations per second compared with 20,000 per second in humans. This sensitive hearing

can alert you to visitors or danger, but it also means you should take care with loud noises, and be patient when your Great Dane howls at a train whistle or siren.

A Great Dane puppy's sense of smell is much more acute than a human's - tens of thousands of times more acute by some estimations.

We'll never fully understand what their world looks like, smells like or sounds like, just as Great Danes will never even be able to understand how different our world is. But we both understand one thing: affection. Kindness crosses all barriers and lessens all differences.



# Schedules For You Great Dane

Because Great Danes are creatures of habit, schedules are very important. You need to schedule when to feed, water, exercise and take your dog outdoors to eliminate.

## Why schedule?

For one thing, schedules will make your Great Dane happy. Knowing what will happen and when it will happen gives your dog a sense of security. Also, schedules make it easier to train and control your Great Dane. Housetraining in particular is generally easier with a schedule, supervision and encouragement.

## Scheduling food and water

Feed your Great Dane at the same time every day, whether you feed your dog once a day or more often. After 15 minutes, take away any uneaten food. Water should always be available.

If you know when your Great Dane ate and drank you will have a pretty good idea when he will need to go outside. You will also be training his digestive system as well, which will help take some of the guesswork out of housetraining.

## Scheduling elimination

Remember preventive training - it's always best to think ahead. Take your Great Dane outside when you think he might have to eliminate, rather than wait too long and run the risk of an accident indoors. The more times your Great Dane eliminates outdoors where you want him to, the slimmer the chance for him to have an accident indoors. The clearer the picture to your dog, the quicker he will catch on to what you want. Great Danes really want to please you and you can show them how to do it.

Always accompany your new Great Dane outdoors. That way, you can take him to a pre-selected area in your yard to eliminate, therefore doing away with the habit of smelling the whole yard to find the desired area. You will also be assured that your Great Dane has eliminated before bringing him indoors, and you can praise him.

## Elimination schedules for Great Dane puppies

Great Dane puppies need to go out frequently. At eight weeks old, a trip outside every two to three hours during the day is suggested. By four months that can be

about every four to five hours. Most puppies can make it through the night by four months of age or a bit older. By nine months or so, most Great Danes can get by on three or four trips outside a day, though more are always appreciated. As your Great Dane gets into its senior years, these trips will need to be increased again.

### Scheduling exercise and play

Exercise is important for all Great Danes. Many adult Great Danes are either overweight or likely to get that way due to diet and lack of an exercise program. Lack of exercise can cause Great Danes to exhibit destructive chewing behavior because they become bored or are trying to burn off excess energy. Taking your dog for a 15-20 minute walk can help socialize him, give you a chance to bond while doing something together, and is a great way for you to get some exercise, too.



# Great Danes And Discipline

Most would agree that the day you bring the Great Dane puppy home, you already need to have the direction picked out in which you want to go with him.

Disciplining one is a matter of thinking and working a step ahead of your Great Dane. Do it with love, gentleness but firmness as well.

You also need to keep in mind that a Great Dane that is well behaved today, may not remain so forever. Your dog's behavior constantly changes; new problems can always develop, and existing ones could get worse. So make the discipline constant.

Training your Great Dane is the most important thing you will do for him and for yourself, because it allows both you and your dog to have a much better relationship together.

A trained Dane will listen, and can safely be allowed freedom more than an untrained one.

A disciplined and well-trained Great Dane is more confident and makes a wonderful companion that is smart, socially acceptable, loving and blessed with boundless energy - in short, a pleasure to live with.

A poorly trained dog can be a loud, rambunctious, and a destructive nuisance around the house that weighs on you more like a commitment and responsibility rather than a blessing.

## Teach them young

The trick, just like teaching children, is to teach your Dane young. At this point in their life, Danes don't know any better, so don't wait to begin stressing them out when they are older and more difficult to control.

It is not fair to allow your Great Dane to pull on the leash when he is a small puppy, when it doesn't hurt your hand, only to scold and shout at him if he does the same when he is big and strong and makes your arms feel like they are being pulled from their joints. It is not fair on your dog and certainly not fair on you.

Start the training some place that is familiar to your Great Dane, where there is minimum distraction.

But remember socialization is also an important part of the training because you don't want to end up with a shy Great Dane.

After both of you are skilled at several obedience commands, start taking him to different areas for practice, where there are increasing amount of distractions present. Examples include areas near a supermarket, school and a busy park on Sundays. You may find that it seems as if you are starting all over again, but you'll have a superbly trained dog at the end of it. So it's worth the effort.

### Keep in mind Great Danes are intelligent

Being an intelligent dog has its own advantages and drawbacks.

They are quick to learn.

It also means Danes can have a mind of their own, and may sometimes appear stubborn. They are highly trainable and do not respond well to rough methods. It is important to start their training early, as they need to be obedient on command so as not to frighten strangers or knock someone over.

Understand how to train your Dane, and familiarize yourself with the way they respond to your training. Not every Dane will be the same; just like people each dog has its own personality and level of comprehension. This means while some Danes may be quick to catch on, it may take others more training session in order for them to catch on.

As owners, you must maintain respect for you dog when training your Dane. Respect goes both ways.

Respect their intelligence. Love them. Set the rules for behavior. Trust them. There is no need for extreme measures to show Danes that you are the top dog.

Handle any slow learning skills with patients and encouragement - don't give up on their training.

### Utilize their high play drive

Utilize their high play drive for more effective obedience training.

Conduct "play training" where by the training tasks are made into fun games and the Great Dane's high play drive is used as motivation. There are a lot of really good books available on this type of training.

While training your Great Dane, you have to make him WANT to do what you want him to. You can't expect your dog to willingly want to participate unless it is FUN or interesting. Otherwise you are wasting both your time and his.

Your goal is to make training your Dane's favorite activity.

Great Danes LOVE to play! You will have the happiest Dane in the world and most obedient if you will just spend some time, giving them your undivided attention everyday. Otherwise they feel ignored, bored and will tear or chew things up and will not listen to you.

**Some tried and proven tactics you can use to make your Great Dane listen to you more.**

\* When playing with your Great Dane puppy, play at his level.

If play is encouraged at ground level, this builds your role as the dominant or top dog when you are standing and training your puppy. If the puppy is allowed to jump up and initiate play, this can lead to unwanted jumping up as the Great Dane gets older.

\* From the very beginning, make sure your Great Dane knows you are the master.

However, it suffices to teach your Great Dane to obey simple commands of raising a paw in a handshake, giving a hand lick for a kiss or doing a roll over to show his submission to you. Most Great Danes love performing these simple tricks (obedience commands) for you.

There is no need for extreme measures to prove you are the boss. Obedience training should be fun and rewarding for you and your Great Dane.

\* Once it is established you are the boss, one owner declared: "Life with your Great Dane will be just kidney bean dancin' all the way!" Another reported: "My Great Dane only wanted to play at obedience class until I got serious and showed him I was the boss."

\* The Great Dane must always eat after you do.

This is the easiest way to show to your Great Dane who is the boss. But this is easier said than done when there are many people in the family, and not everyone respects the rule.

\* Very active young Great Danes have short attention span.

It is best to have many short 5 to 10-minute lessons than a single, long 30-minute lesson. Keep the training session short and sweet. Lengthy session easily becomes dull, boring and tedious for both you and the Great Dane.

\* Start the training at quiet places familiar to your Dane with very few things and

people around to distract him.

Gradually move the training to places with more and more distractions so he will learn to obey your commands despite the distractions.

\* Speak to your Great Dane strongly but not in an angry voice.

Be kind but be firm while training, and never give in to what they want. It may seem cruel but in the long run you will have a much better relationship with you Great Dane.

\* Celebrate after every training session for a good job done.

Have a big play by running and throwing his favorite toys. If you give them a lot of playtime with yourself they'd listen to you more.

\* Use only one word like "sit," "down," "drop" and "stay" when teaching Dane commands. For example, when your Great Dane gets on the lounge with you, say "sit - down" and he should sit then lay down on your lap.

\* To keep a Great Dane from charging the front door, put up a door/gate that he can't see through or hop over.

Have him wait till people enter and come up the stairs then he gets a treat. This particular owner noticed that even when the gate is left open the Dane will not usually go by unless they see a squirrel or cat!

\* Finally, no matter how well trained you think your Great Dane is, he has an attention span of seconds!

Don't let him run away, because he'll just keep going and going. Always keep him leashed outdoors if not in a fenced area. He can run faster than you, and you will not catch him if he runs for the road!





## Becoming A Pack Leader

There is no equality in dogdom. You're either ahead or behind your Great Dane in line and that is decided by how you interact with your dog. Being a good leader means being calm, kind and consistent. Here are a few suggestions:

Teach your Great Dane to control his mouth. If he mouths or nips you, react with a startling "No biting!" This will teach him that you are not another puppy and he needs to treat you differently.

Have him 'sit' or 'down' before you give him anything he wants, from petting to tossing a toy. When he responds to you before you respond to him, he will start to look to you to set the rules, while at the same time getting in daily training practice.

Practice submission exercises daily. These include holding him in your arms or on his side and speaking to him gently until he stops squirming. When he stops, release him, praise and give him a kibble of food. Gently handle his ears, mouth and paws so he learns to accept this. These exercises are easy with most Great Danes but if your dog really struggles or gets upset, seek assistance from a qualified dog professional.

Use tone of voice to communicate. A higher than normal pitch is exciting and playful and perfect for praise. A normal tone - direct and confident - is your command tone. A lowered voice your Great Dane hears as a warning, like a growl. With practice, your puppy can learn to understand your mood through your tone of voice.

When you get home, you and your family should eat in your Great Dane's presence before setting out the dog food. Among dogs, the most important dogs always eat first.

Walk through doors first.

Remember: Pack leaders NEVER share their food with other dogs. If you follow all of the steps above and then give your dog table scraps and bites of your sandwich you are sending mixed signals to your Great Dane.

If you do these things consistently, you can elevate yourself in your Great Dane's eyes, which can make all the difference in training.



# Housebreaking Your Great Dane Puppy

Whilst housebreaking your Great Dane puppy may not be a priority in choosing a new dog it usually springs to the top once the little chap gets home! I am often surprised at the number of people who find house training puppies so hard.

When you bring a new Great Dane or puppy home, you should move to establish a routine as soon as possible. The faster you get things on track, the fewer mistakes you'll have to clean up. Although there are different strategies and ways of housetraining a puppy or dog, the following instructions are a good way to teach your pet to eliminate outdoors.

## House training step by step

Housetraining can take different amounts of time for different Great Danes. But by applying schedules, setting boundaries for where elimination is acceptable, a verbal command, praise and crate training, you should see progress over time.

The good news is that you can banish the idea of having a house full of smelly old newspapers for the first 6 months of puppy potty training!

Great Danes like most animals are naturally born/raised in a 'nest' environment and will want to move away from the 'nest' to complete their potty functions. This makes housebreaking puppies easier than you may think. Most dogs will start doing this by themselves after about 3 weeks - your job is to make sure that when they start this natural process, they know where the 'right place' to go is!

Consistency and perseverance are the watch words for all types of training, and especially for housebreaking puppies. For successful puppy potty training it is essential that each time an activity changes you take your puppy/dog outside to the nominated place to do his 'business':

- Every hour up to the age of about 8/9 weeks
- Shortly after each feed
- After playing
- After exercise
- After any other excitement (visitors etc)
- Last thing at night
- First thing in the morning

Corrections and punishments for indoor accidents will only teach your puppy not to eliminate around you (even when outdoors), but won't stop him from eliminating indoors when you're not around. If you catch the puppy in the act, say 'No!' sharply and carry the puppy outside.

**Warning** Avoid giving your Great Dane the message that relieving himself is wrong. Don't rub his nose in the mess, and don't hit him with a newspaper.

When house training dogs praise is absolutely critical, and the praise must be for the act of doing the business - not for going outside or for coming back in - dogs associate actions with praise - so catching them in the act is key to all successful training.

Choose some words that you will use for each act and stick with them - this will pay dividends throughout your dog's life. Remember to choose words you are happy to use in public!

Make sure you feed your Great Dane at regular times everyday as this makes bathroom breaks regular as well. Feed your puppy 2-3 times a day.

As soon as he is finished eating, take him to a grassy "potty area". Speak the words "go potty" or "go in the grass" before and while he is eliminating. Be sure to praise him when he is done.

What you are doing is building word associations with your Great Dane that will allow you to encourage his potty activity on command.

This comes in handy when you and your Great Dane are at unusual locations and at pit stops during long haul travel. It also saves you from cleaning unwanted fecal material off the carpet at home.

In the early days of housebreaking your Great Dane it is important to let your puppy/dog out during the night. You will quickly learn to recognize the difference between cries for attention and cries for a real need - this is the only way your puppy/dog can let you know, so it is vital that you respond. However, this night time requirement must be for business only, praise for doing the job and then straight back to bed - just like with children. If you are not strict with this, you will very quickly find yourself with a night time play routine which your puppy/dog will adore!

It is a good idea to train your puppy to use a place where you can easily clean up and dispose of the droppings into the sewer. This is because worms that infect dogs and make them sick get spread around through the eggs or larvae found in the feces. Some, like the roundworm, can also infect children.



## House Training Accidents

Housetraining accidents can be frustrating but finding a mistake in the house can mean more than that your dog simply isn't housetrained. Before you blame your Great Dane, look at all the possible reasons.

### Why Great Danes have accidents

Once you find the cause of a dog's accidents, a solution often becomes evident.

Common causes include:

- A medical condition such as a urinary tract infection or parasites. If your dog urinates small amounts frequently, suspect a urinary tract infection and contact your veterinarian.
- Territorial marking. If your Great Dane is lifting his leg in the house, he may be marking his territory. This is a behavior training issue, not a housetraining issue.
- Anxiety or fear caused by being alone or some outside event like construction or loud noises.
- Confusion about what is expected, which means your Great Dane is not actually housetrained.

### Solving the problem

Step one to resolving this problem is finding the cause and your first stop is the veterinarian. Once a medical condition is ruled out, then these basic steps should help get you back on track.

- Schedule food, water and exercise. This will help make the digestive system more predictable.
- Consider crate training.
- Try to catch him in the act and distract him by saying "Ahhh" or "No" in a serious tone. This should stop him in mid-stream. Then take him outside to finish the job.
- Always praise your Great Dane and offer a kibble of food as a treat for relieving himself where and when you want. This will strengthen and reinforce good habits.

- Clean up accidents with a good odor remover so no lingering smell attracts him back to that spot.
- Make sure your Great Dane isn't left alone too long. If you work, either come home midday, hire a walker, or leave your pup in a small area on papers (Don't put papers inside a crate).

If your Great Dane is having accidents the moment he or she is left alone, please seek the help of a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional, as this may be a sign of separation anxiety.

### Do's and don'ts

- Do get Great Dane puppies outside at least six times a day, adult dogs at least four.
- Don't punish your dog after the fact – you'll just give your Great Dane another source of fear, which could lead to more accidents.
- Do go out with him to praise and reward him for going outside.
- Don't rub your Great Dane's nose in the mess - this will scare him.
- Do control where and when your Great Dane goes to the bathroom by using a crate, regular routine and close supervision.



# Crate Training Your Great Dane

Most Great Dane owners do not use crates for their Great Danes, however most expert trainers and vets recommend them.

Providing your Great Dane puppy or dog with an indoor kennel crate can satisfy many dogs' need for a den-like enclosure. Besides being an effective housebreaking tool (because it takes advantage of your Great Dane's natural reluctance to soil its sleeping place), it can also help to reduce separation anxiety, to prevent destructive behavior (such as chewing furniture), to keep a puppy away from potentially dangerous household items (i.e., poisons, electrical wires, etc.), and to serve as a mobile indoor dog house which can be moved from room to room whenever necessary.

A kennel crate also serves as a travel cabin for you Great Dane when traveling by car or plane. Additionally, most hotels which accept dogs on their premises require them to be crated while in the room to prevent damage to hotel furniture and rugs.

Most Great Danes which have been introduced to the kennel crate while still young grow up to prefer their crate to rest in or "hang-out" in. Therefore a crate (or any other area of confinement) should NEVER be used for the purpose of punishment.

We recommend that you provide a kennel crate throughout your Great Dane's lifetime. Some crates allow for the removal of the door once it is no longer necessary for the purpose of training. The crate can be placed under a table, or a table top can be put on top of it to make it both unobtrusive and useful.

## Why crate train your Great Dane?

Here are seven good reasons why you should use a crate for your Great Dane.

1. Dogs in the wild live in a den which provides protection and a great deal of psychological satisfaction. All dogs, including Great Danes, have a strong natural tendency to seek out this type of shelter.
2. In your home, if your dog has no place to call his own, he will make feeble attempts to curl up under a table, a chair or some other choice location.
3. When you use a crate, you give your Great Dane a place to feel secure...something to get his back up against. He won't feel isolated because the crate provides essential visibility & ventilation. Just like a

baby in a playpen.

4. You will also be taking advantage of your Great Danes natural instinct to keep his home clean, therefore, when he has to “go” he will try to hold it until you can take him outside to the proper area. This will teach him a schedule and help him eliminate accidents.
5. With a crate, your Great Dane puppy will have fewer behavioral problems like excessive barking and chewing.
6. Crates make comfortable and safe places for your Great Dane to travel in.
7. But most of all, by providing him a safe and secure home, he'll be happier and more self confident.

### Buying a crate

Where to buy a crate: Crates can be purchased through most pet supply outlets, through pet mail order catalogs and through most professional breeders. There are a number of crate manufactures but like Midwest and Vari-Kennels.

Your dog should be able to stand up and turn around comfortably. Individual dogs within a breed can vary in size. You may decide a crate one size smaller or larger might be best for your Great Dane. Midwest wire crates are 54 L x 37 W x 45 H".

Crates can cost between \$35 and \$250 depending on the size and the type of crate and the source.

The cost of not using a crate:

- Your shoes
- Books
- Table legs
- Chairs and sofas
- Throw rugs and carpet, and
- Electric, telephone and computer wires.
- The real cost, however, is your Great Dane's safety and your peace of mind.

### Location of your Great Danes crate

Whenever possible, place the crate near or next to you when you are home. This will encourage your Great Dane to go inside it without his feeling lonely or isolated when you go out. A central room in the apartment (i.e.: living room or

kitchen) or a large hallway near the entrance is a good place to crate your puppy.

### Preparing the crate

**Vari-Kennel Type:** Take the crate apart, removing the screws, the top and the door. Allow your pup to go in and out of the bottom half of the crate before attaching the top half. This stage can require anywhere from several hours to a few days. This step can be omitted in the case of a young puppy who accepts crating right away.

**Wire Mesh Type:** Tie the crate door back so that it stays open without moving or shutting closed. If the crate comes with a floor pan, place a piece of cardboard or a towel between the floor (or crate bottom) and the floor pan in order to keep it from rattling.

### Furnishing your Great Dane puppy's crate

**Toys and Treats:** Place your Great Dane's favorite toys and dog treats at the far end opposite the door opening. These toys may include the "Tuffy", "Billy", "Kong", "Nylabone" or a ball. Toys and baits should always be inedible and large enough to prevent their being swallowed. Any fragmented toys should be removed to prevent choking and internal obstruction. You may also place a sterilized marrow bone filled with cheese or dog treats in the crate.

**Water:** A small hamster-type water dispenser with ice water should be attached to the crate if your puppy is to be confined for more than two hours in the crate.

**Bedding:** Place a towel or blanket inside the crate to create a soft, comfortable bed for the puppy. If your puppy chews the towel, remove it to prevent him from swallowing or choking on the pieces. Although most Great Dane puppies prefer lying on soft bedding, some may prefer to rest on a hard, flat surface, and may push the towel to one end of the crate to avoid it. If the puppy urinates on the towel, remove bedding until your Great Dane no longer eliminates in the crate.

### Introducing the crate to your puppy

In order that your Great Dane puppy associate his/her kennel crate with comfort, security and enjoyment, please follow these guidelines:

1. Occasionally throughout the day, drop small pieces of kibble or dog biscuits in the crate. While investigating his new crate, your Great Dane pup will discover edible treasures, thereby reinforcing his positive associations with the crate. You may also feed him in the crate to create the same effect. If the dog hesitates, it often works to feed him in front of the crate, then right inside the doorway and then, finally, in the back of the crate.



2. In the beginning, praise and pet your puppy when he enters. Do not try to push, pull or force him into the crate. At this early stage of introduction only inductive methods are suggested. Overnight exception: You may need to place your Great Dane in his crate and shut the door upon retiring. (In most cases, the crate should be placed next to your bed overnight. If this is not possible, the crate can be placed in the kitchen, bathroom or living room.)
3. You may also play this enjoyable and educational game with your Great Dane puppy or dog: Without alerting your puppy, drop a small dog biscuit into the crate. Then call your puppy and say to him, "Where's the biscuit? It's in your room." Using only a friendly, encouraging voice, direct your puppy toward his crate. When the puppy discovers the treat, give enthusiastic praise. The biscuit will automatically serve as a primary reward. Your pup should be free to leave its crate at all times during this game. Later on, your puppy's toy or ball can be substituted for the treat.
4. It is advisable first to crate your Great Dane for short periods of time while you are home with him. In fact, crate training is best accomplished while you are in the room with your Great Dane. Getting him used to your absence from the room in which he is crated is a good first step. This prevents an association being made with the crate and your leaving him/her alone.

### Important reminders

Great Dane puppies under 4 months of age have little bladder or sphincter control. Puppies under 3 months have even less. Very young puppies under 9 weeks should not be crated, as they need to eliminate very frequently (usually 8-12 times or more daily).

1. **Collars**: Always remove your puppy or dog's collar before confining in the crate. Even flat buckle collars can occasionally get stuck on the bars or wire mesh of a crate. If you must leave a collar on the pup when you crate him (e.g.: for his identification tag), use a safety "break away" collar.
2. **Warm Weather**: Do not crate a Great Dane puppy or dog when temperatures reach an uncomfortable level. Cold water should always be available to puppies, especially during warm weather. **[Never leave an unsupervised Great Dane on a terrace, roof or inside a car during warm weather. Also, keep outdoor exercise periods brief until the hot weather subsides.]**
3. Be certain that your Great Dane has fully eliminated shortly before being crated. Be sure that the crate you are using is not too large to discourage

your puppy from eliminating in it. Rarely does a Great Dane puppy or dog eliminate in the crate if it is properly sized and your dog is an appropriate age to be crated a given amount of time. If your Great Dane continues to eliminate in the crate, the following may be the causes:

- Your Great Dane is too young to have much control.
- Your Great Dane has a poor or rich diet, or very large meals.
- Your Great Dane did not eliminate prior to being confined.
- Your Great Dane has worms.
- Your Great Dane has gaseous or loose stools.
- Your Great Dane drank large amounts of water prior to being crated.
- Your Great Dane has been forced to eliminate in small confined areas prior to crate training.
- Your Great Dane is suffering from a health condition or illness (i.e., bladder infection, prostate problem, etc.)
- Your Great Dane is experiencing severe separation anxiety when left alone.

### Accidents in the crate

If your Great Dane puppy messes in his crate while you are out, do not punish him upon your return. Simply wash out the crate using a pet odor neutralizer (such as Nature's Miracle, Nilodor, or Outright). **Do not** use ammonia-based products, as their odor resembles urine and may draw your Great Dane back to urinate in the same spot again.

Great Dane puppies purchased in pet stores, or puppies which were kept solely in small cages or other similar enclosures at a young age (between approximately 7 and 16 weeks of age), may be considerably harder to housebreak using the crate training method due to their having been forced to eliminate in their sleeping area during this formative stage of development.

This is the time when most puppies are learning to eliminate outside their sleeping area. Confining them with their waste products retards the housebreaking process, and this problem can continue throughout a dog's adult life.

## Crating duration guidelines

9-10 Weeks	Approx. 30-60 minutes
11-14 Weeks	Approx. 1-3 hours
15-16 Weeks	Approx. 3-4 hours
17 + Weeks	Approx. 4+ (6 hours maximum)

Except for overnight, neither puppies nor dogs should be crated for more than 5 hours at a time. (6 hours maximum!)

## The crate as a punishment

**NEVER** use the crate as a form of punishment or reprimand for your puppy or dog. This simply causes the dog to fear and resent the crate. If correctly introduced to his crate, your puppy should be happy to go into his crate at any time. You may however use the crate as a brief time-out for your puppy as a way of discouraging nipping or excessive rowdiness.

## Children and the crate

Do not allow children to play in your Great Dane's crate or to handle your dog while he/she is in the crate. The crate is your Great Dane's private sanctuary. His/her rights to privacy should always be respected.

## Barking in the crate

In most cases a Great Dane puppy who cries incessantly in his crate has either been crated too soon (without taking the proper steps as outlined above) or is suffering from separation anxiety and is anxious about being left alone. Some Great Danes may simply under exercised. Others may not have enough attention paid them. Try increasing the amount of exercise and play your dog receives daily.

## When not to use a crate

Do not crate your puppy or dog if:

- Your Great Dane is too young to have sufficient bladder or sphincter control.
- Your Great Dane has diarrhea. Diarrhea can be caused by: worms, illness, intestinal upsets such as colitis, too much and/or the wrong kinds of food, quick changes in the dogs diet, or stress, fear or anxiety.
- Your Great Dane is vomiting.

- You must leave him crated for more than the Crating Duration Guidelines suggest.
- Your Great Dane has not eliminated shortly before being placed inside the crate.  
(See Housetraining Guidelines for exceptions.)
- The temperature is excessively high.
- Your Great Dane has not had sufficient exercise, companionship and socialization.

### Alternative methods of confining your Great Dane puppy

There are alternative methods to crating very young Great Dane puppies and puppies who must be left alone in the house for lengths of time exceeding the recommended maximum duration of confinement.

Try the following:

Use a small to medium-sized room space such as a kitchen, large bathroom or hallway with non-porous floor. Set up the crate on one end, the food and water a few feet away, and some newspaper (approx. 2'x3' to 3'x3') using a 3 to 4 layer thickness, several feet away. Confine your puppy to this room or area using a 3 ft. high, safety-approved child's gate rather than shutting off the opening by a solid door. Your pup will feel less isolated if it can see out beyond its immediate place of confinement. Puppy proof the area by removing any dangerous objects or substances.



# Basic Great Dane Obedience Training

Good Great Dane puppy training is the key to a well behaved dog. Good dog behavior makes your Great Dane a pleasure to own and a credit to you as its owner - this is why it is important to teach your dog to respond to simple commands.

No training routine should be a chore; it should be fun for both of you and will bring many benefits for years to come. It is extremely satisfying owning a well behaved dog, but the early steps of dog training require consistency, understanding and unlimited patience to make training puppies easy!

## 10 Top Tips To Ensure Great Dane Training Success

1. Make training fun for both of you. If you and your dog are enjoying yourselves, you're more likely to succeed.
2. Before you start your training session for the day, have your goals in mind.
3. Be patient and progress gradually
4. Don't make the sessions too long, avoid boredom (for both of you!)
5. Reward good behavior with praise and treats
6. Never shout at or punish your Great Dane
7. Teach one thing at a time
8. Always use the same command words for the same actions - and make sure the rest of your family does too
9. Keep training sessions short. 3 short sessions of 5-10 minutes each will teach your dog more than 1 30-minute session.
10. Timing is everything in dog training. Video yourself or have a friend watch you to make sure that you reward your dog as he does the behavior you ask for- not afterwards! Studies have shown that one of the biggest differences between pro trainers and amateurs is that the pros give their rewards in a timely manner while the amateurs are late.

Most Great Danes are born with an inherent desire to please and this natural trait is maximized with enthusiastic training combined with a reward system. Always reward good dog behavior - this means every single time he is obedient and

responds to your commands. Rewards based dog training is without doubt the most effective.

Great Dane puppies, just like babies, learn from trial and error - so if your dog burns his nose on the fire, it is extremely unlikely that he would ever do it a second time! If he barks for attention and everyone ignores him, he will soon give up. However, it is easy for your dog obedience training to go wrong if he does something wrong and is rewarded, like raiding the bin and finding food, as then he is likely to repeat it.

Repeat rewarding good dog behavior and stopping doing the things that are unpleasant or unrewarding is the basis of all learning experience. In order to train your dog / puppy you simply need to exploit this process and manipulate situations so that he learns what you want him to do.

All Great Dane puppies (and humans!) learn more quickly and retain more of what they have learned, if they do not feel under stress. This means that puppy training using rewards is far more effective and sustainable than teaching using punishment. It is important to create a feeling of trust between you and your dog / puppy whilst using any puppy training techniques - this allows your dog to find new ways of earning rewards, without the fear of being wrong.

Rewards when puppy training can be anything that your dog / puppy wants - the most obvious is food, however pleasant social contact, verbal praise (usually accompanied by that high pitched, excited, squeaky voice that we do so naturally!) and physical praise, strokes on the back and/or chest also work really well - but not pats on the head, who would enjoy that!

The quickest and easiest way to train a happy working dog is with food. You can use the food to lure your dog into position and to make the behavior really rewarding for your dog. Don't worry- you'll fade the use of food out quickly!

Games with toys are good puppy training rewards - but just like humans, different dogs are motivated by different things. You will need to find out what motivates your dog and what is the most successful puppy training reward and therefore will work best.

Sometimes we expect too much from our dogs too soon. Great Danes are really bad about generalizing. For instance, just because they know "sit" in the living room, does not mean that they know what "sit" means in the park. You'll have to practice each new command in a variety of places before your dog knows it everywhere. But remember, the more commands you teach your dog, the more quickly he'll generalize new ones!

The secret is to make your Great Dane training positive and fun.



## Training Your Great Dane To Sit

### Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your Great Dane into a quiet room.

### Step 2

Hold a treat just over and above your Great Dane's nose. Slowly draw it straight up so that your dog's nose follows the food. He'll sit when you do so, to keep the food in sight. Don't give any command at this stage!

### Step 3

As your dog is sitting (be quick!) praise your dog and give him the treat! Repeat until your dog is sitting quickly when he sees the food move. Take a break!

### Step 4

Get ready with your dog and food as for the first session. Take a piece of food, say "sit", and then lure your dog into position. Praise and treat. Repeat until your Great Dane is starting to sit as you say the word "sit". Take a break!

### Step 5

Now you start to fade the food. Get ready as you did for the last session. Say "sit". When your Great Dane sits, praise and pet your dog! Repeat the "sit", but this time give your dog a treat for sitting. Repeat, giving your dog a treat at random times. Remember the "jackpot principle" referred to in my first article!

### Step 6

Now you can start to generalize. Ask your Great Dane to sit in different locations. Depending on your dog, you may need to lure a few sits with food first in the first few new locations. Randomly treat the sits. Keep practicing in new locations until your dog reliably sits on the first command no matter where you are.

Congratulations- you have trained your Great Dane to sit!



## How To Train Your Great Dane To Stay

### Step 1

Get a supply of small, tasty treats. Go into a quiet room. Have your Great Dane sit. Hold a treat in your hand, and let your dog know you have it. As your dog reaches for it, close your hand. The instant your dog pulls his head even a bit away, praise and let him have the treat. Timing is important here! Repeat until your dog does not go for the treat, but instead instantly pulls back.

### Step 2

Repeat Step 1, but wait for a second or two after your Great Dane pulls back before giving the treat and praise. Make sure you treat/praise while your dog is sitting! If he gets up, walk a couple of steps away and try again. Repeat until your dog is sitting for 5 seconds. Stay right by your dog while doing this! The commonest reason that people have trouble teaching stay is that they try to leave their dogs too quickly. If your Great Dane won't stay when you are next to him, he certainly won't stay when you walk away! Making sure your dog is always successful in this step before you move on will make later learning much more successful.

### Step 3

Continue step 2, but now tell your dog "stay" as you show the treat, and give a release word like "OK" when you give your Great Dane the treat. Work until your dog will sit with you right in front of him for 30 seconds. If your dog gets up, quietly say something like "uh-uh" and try again. You want your dog to learn that "uh-uh" means that he won't get a reward.

After your dog makes a mistake, scale back your criterion a bit. For example, if he got up after 15 seconds, go back to sitting for 10 seconds for the next few tries, then try 15 again. If your dog makes more than 1 or 2 mistakes in a row, you are hurrying too fast. Move back to what your dog can do successfully and build from there.

### Step 4

Repeat step 3, but begin to move away from your dog just a little bit- for example, take 1 step backward then return. Then take a step to one side, then the other. Repeat until you can walk in a tiny circle around your dog. Again, if your dog gets up, say "uh-uh" and try again. Remember not to hurry.



### Step 5

Repeat step 4, but start walking up to 5 steps away from your Great Dane. Continue until your dog will stay for 30 seconds while you walk no more than 5 steps away.

### Step 6

Start doing stays in areas with some distraction and in new areas. When first practicing in a new area, go back to very short stays right in front of you, and only do more when your dog is always successful. Repeat until your dog will stay in a new area for 30 seconds with you 5 steps away.

### Step 7

Very slowly lengthen the distance you go when you walk away to 30 feet, and the time to 1 minute. Remember not to hurry!

### Step 8

You can train a down-stay in the same way, starting at step 1. It should go much faster, now that your dog knows something about staying.

Congratulations- you have a Great Dane who can stay!



## Teach Your Great Dane The Down Command

### Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your dog into a quiet room.

### Step 2

Hold a treat just in front of your Great Dane's nose. Slowly draw it down and between your dog's front legs, towards the ground. He'll lay down as he follows the food. Don't give any command at this stage! If your dog has a hard time with this, hold the treat under a chair or table where he'll have to lay down to get at it.

### Step 3

As your dog is laying down (be quick!) praise him and give him the treat! Repeat until your dog is laying down quickly when he sees the food move. Take a break!

### Step 4

Get ready with your dog and food as for the first session. Take a piece of food, say "down", and then lure your dog into position. It helps if you point to the ground; using a motion similar to the way you used the food lure (you can use this later as a signal to your dog.). Praise and treat. Repeat until your dog is starting to lay down as you say the word "down". Take a break!

### Step 5

Now you start to fade the food. Get ready as you did for the last session. Say "down". When your dog lays down, praise and pet your dog! Repeat the "down", but this time give your dog a treat for laying down. Repeat, giving your dog a treat at random times. Remember the "jackpot principle" referred to in my first article!

### Step 6

Now you can start to generalize. Ask your Great Dane to lay down in different locations. Depending on your dog, you may need to lure a few "downs" with food first in the beginning few new locations. Randomly treat successful downs. Keep practicing in new locations until your dog reliably lays down on the first command no matter where you are.

Congratulations- you have trained your Great Dane to lay down!



## How To Train Your Great Dane To Come

The "come" command is one that is routinely disobeyed by many Great Danes- and often for good reason!

To start with, here are a few rules for teaching "come":

- Never call your Great Dane to you for anything he may perceive as negative- scolding, baths, nail clipping, pill-giving, etc. If you need to give your dog a bath or pill, go get your dog! "Come" should always be a command your dog is happy to hear.
- Never call your Great Dane when you can't reinforce the command or haven't trained your dog to respond to the command. You are just teaching your dog to ignore you.
- If your Great Dane already routinely ignores the word "come", pick a new command word like "here" or "front" to use while training your dog.

### Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your dog into a quiet room; one where you have enough room to take several steps backwards and where there is nothing of great interest to your dog.

### Step 2

When your dog is a few steps away from you, and not looking at you, say "Rover, come!" in a happy, high-pitched voice. As he turns to you, back up quickly so he has to run to catch you (the chase instinct is a powerful motivator for most dogs!). As he reaches you, lure him into a sit and give him treats and praise! Repeat until he is running up to you at the sound of your call. Take a break!

### Step 3

Repeat the step above. Now, however, before you give your Great Dane his treat, take hold of his collar as he sits. Feed him while you hold his collar. As you release the collar, say "Go play!" This step ensures that you can control your dog when he comes to you. Without this training, lots of dogs will just run up to you and run circles around you when you call them! Repeat until he is sitting in front of you, and you can take his collar every time you call him.

### Step 4

Now move to the back yard (or a small, safe, boring fenced area if you do not have a yard) - Repeat Step 2 above. If your dog does not come as soon as you call him, turn and run! He'll run after you to catch up.

It's best to train this without a leash (after all, most of the times you want your dog to come to you, he'll be off-leash), but if your dog isn't responding, put him on a leash. Do not let the leash get tight, however, unless you have to run backwards, and do not jerk the leash or yell at your dog. Even if you need to use the leash, make sure to praise and pet your dog when he gets to you! Save the treats for the times he responds right away. After a few sessions with the leash on, let it drag, picking it up only if your dog does not respond to the command. Then remove it.

Repeat until your dog is turning and running to you reliably every time you call. Don't forget to take hold of his collar and release him with "go play!"

### Step 5

For this step, you'll need a "long line" You can use a 50' piece of clothesline or a special long nylon leash. Practice in your back yard or fenced area. Let your Great Dane drag the line; do not pick it up. Let your dog wander away. If he starts to go too far, step on the line (but try to call him before he goes too far!).

When he is about 10' away, call him. If he responds right away, treats and praise! If he does not, run backwards as in step 4 above. Remember to praise and pet as he comes to you. If he does not come even when you run back, take hold of the line and give it a gentle tug. Praise and pet your Dane when he comes to you.

Save the treats for the times he responds right away. Repeat until he is running up to you at the sound of your call, every time. Don't forget to take hold of his collar and release him with "go play!" Take a break!

### Step 6

Repeat step 5 above, but gradually let your dog go a little further before you call him. When he comes every time from 50', go to step 7.

### Step 7

Repeat Step 6 in many different areas until your Great Dane is absolutely reliable. Gradually introduce distractions such as people nearby, other dogs, food, etc. If your dog is distracted, shorten the leash and work until he comes even with the distraction. When your dog comes every time, even with distractions, go to step 8.

## Step 8

In a safe, fenced-in area, remove the leash. Let your Great Dane get some distance away. Call him. If he comes right away (he should!), have a party!

If not, walk him down. Do not yell or get mad, but calmly walk up to your dog and take him by the collar (no matter how long it takes you to catch him!). Quickly walk him back to where you first called, giving the collar short shakes and saying something like "I said "come"!". At the point where you called him, release him and then call again. He should come straight to you- most dogs need only one or two collar shakes to know you mean business. Repeat until he comes every time.

Congratulations- you have taught your Great Dane to come!



## How To Train Your Great Dane To Walk Nicely

This method relies on the fact that dogs out for a walk like to go somewhere. It is very effective.

### Step 1

Put your Great Dane on a leash, preferably a 4-foot one. From now on, you will tolerate no pulling. Every time your dog pulls, immediately stop. Plant your feet and do not move. As long as your dog pulls, stay stationary. But, the minute your dog lets up the tension on the leash, praise and continue walking! Don't expect to get very far the first walk. You may not even get out the door! When your dog is properly close to you, give praise and an occasional treat- and the opportunity to keep walking!

### Step 2

Most Great Danes learn very quickly that they don't get to go anywhere if they pull. If you have a really recalcitrant dog, instead of just stopping, every time your dog pulls, quickly turn and walk in the opposite direction. Be prepared to get a bit dizzy! As soon as this method starts having results, switch back to just stopping.

### Step 3

If you have a very large or strong Great Dane, consider using a head halter. These items work like the bridle on a horse- where the head goes, the body must follow. They are not muzzles. A couple popular brands are Halti and Gentle Leader. It is impossible for a dog to pull while wearing a head halter.

Congratulations- you have taught your Great Dane to walk nicely!



## How To Teach Your Great Dane To Retrieve

Teaching your Great Dane to retrieve is one of the easiest commands, simply because it is his nature to carry things in his mouth.

The best items to use when trying to teach your dog to retrieve or fetch items back to you, is with his favorite toys.

It is a good idea to first teach your dog to stay before you learn him fetching, that way you can throw or hide his toy before allowing him to find, retrieve and bring the toy back to you.

### Step 1

Begin by commanding your dog to sit, and place his toy a few steps away from where he is positioned, so that he can clearly see it. Then ask him to find it by using the command "Find" "toy" or the name of the toy. As soon as he goes to the toy, even if he doesn't touch it, praise him instantly and give him a treat. Continue repeating this maneuver, praising him each time, and try to encourage him to pick up the toy in his mouth. Once he picks up the toy, praise him and give him a treat, and then give him back the toy and play with him for a while.

### Step 2

As soon as your Dane has learned how to retrieve the toy, you will then need to begin working on getting him to bring the toy to you. The first time he comes running to you with the toy, praise him right away and give him a treat. After the first time, only praise him when he puts the toy in your hand. You can help him accomplish this by trading the toy for a treat.

### Step 3

Once your dog is able to easily retrieve and give you the toy, you can then begin to proceed with more advanced retrieving exercises, such as randomly hiding toys or other objects somewhere in the house or outside, and give him the command to "find" (or whatever you have been using). His task is to bring you the object or toy that is hidden which contains human scent. You will find that teaching your Dane to retrieve is not only a fun game he will enjoy, but it can be quite useful if you ever lose an item.

The more practice your dog has at it, the better he will get. Remember to always praise him.

Congratulations- you have taught your Great Dane to retrieve!



## How To Teach Your Great Dane How To Swim

Great Danes are good swimmers. However, just like people, they usually need to be introduced to the water before they jump in, as a bad water experience could lead to them having a fear of water, making it nearly impossible for you to ever encourage your Dane to swim.

The best time to teach your Dane to swim is when he is still a puppy, but this doesn't mean you can't teach an older dog to swim. It only implies that the process for an adult Dane may be more of a challenge, but the training process is identical.

### Step 1

Choose a warm day and take your Dane to a calm pond or lake, and bring someone along with you, as you will need them to help you with the task. You will need to wade into the water with you puppy, up to your knees, so make sure you are wearing, shorts, swimwear, or clothing you don't mind getting wet. The other person should be waiting on shore.

Hold your puppy by placing one hand under his belly, and use the other to gently hold the base of his tail, and lower him into the water without letting him go.

Your Dane should instinctively begin to paddle with his paws, encourage him with words of praise, but don't give him any toys or treats as this will only distract him from the task at hand - you will find that words will go a long way.

### Step 2

As soon as your Dane begins a stronger paddle, let go of his belly, but continue to hold on to the base of his tail to support his back end and make it level with the front of his body, and continue to give him praise.

It is very important that you keep your Dane's front and back end level during the first few swimming lessons until he can do the maneuver himself, as swimming vertically will be very difficult for your dog.

### Step 3

As soon as you feel that your dog will be able to stay afloat on his own, have the other person begin to attract the dog's attention by acting excited and vigorously calling him to come.

As soon as your Dane begins to paddle even stronger, release your hold on him, and let him make his way towards the other person on shore. Make sure you



follow after him closely, incase you need to scoop him out of the water if he stops swimming.

If your dog is successful, and reaches the shore, praise him immensely, and reward him.

Each time you repeat the lesson, increase the distance from the shore.

If however, your dog is having a difficult time making it to the shore, decrease the distance, and slowly begin to increase only when he makes progress.

With continuous lessons, before long, you will have taught your Dane how to swim confidently - Congratulations!



## How To Stop Your Great Dane Jumping Up

Great Danes are excitable and may be very “bouncy,” particularly when they meet people.

Guests and owners hate it when dogs jump up for attention....especially when the dogs are as big as they are! The dogs are having a field day because they get more attention than ever.

Think about it. Great Danes jumping to greet people at the door is natural. They see us talking at eye level, and they want to be at eye level, too. So they jump to try to get up to eye level and greet the person at the door. But what results is a nightmare as people then push the dog away (an action that Great Danes consider to be playtime) and yelling.

There's really one main way to try and cure the problem of having a Great Dane jump at you when you enter the house. Simply ignore the dog. When you enter your house, cross your arms over your chest and look straight ahead or up at the sky. Pretend that the dog isn't there at all, until it calms down. You might want to set some of its favorite toys next to the door so you can throw it at the ground when you enter the house in order to divert its attention.

Another tactic is to get a friend to help you. Ask the other person to ring the doorbell 10 times every 30 seconds. You should sit in your living room as if nothing is going on. Completely ignore the doorbell. Your dog at first might jump toward the door. But as the doorbell ringing persists, it will stop.

Also, you might want to try tying up your Great Dane at a certain spot every time the doorbell rings. It can be your dog's spot to go when the doorbell rings. Eventually you can then take your dog off its leash and start teaching it to sit in that spot when the doorbell rings and tell it to “stay,” in order to make a positive door greeting.

### Teach Your Great Dane to Sit Not Jump

A really neat way to prevent and solve this problem is to simply teach your Great Dane to sit to greet people as opposed to jumping on them.

First teach your dog to sit.

Now it is time to have your dog practice sitting for a family member or friend. Have them repeat the same steps you did. At this stage, your dog has surely learned that sitting in front of people is a surefire way to getting praise and treats.

Now practice sitting to greet people at the front door. Don't be surprised if your dog needs a little extra help here. The front door is an exciting place for a dog.

So, stay calm, keep your dog on leash for control and safety and reward like crazy for polite greetings!

After a week or two randomize with what and when you reward. Sometimes offer him a treat. Other times toss a ball after he sits nicely. And still other times simply offer calm, happy praise. This way you keep your dog guessing and don't end up with a dog who sits only when he sees a treat.



## Great Danes And Obedience Class

Discipline is one of the most important aspects of owning a Great Dane.

Puppy school is not an option, it is a necessity to train owners, including children in the family, how to manage the Great Dane and nurture it into becoming a well-adjusted member of the family.

Puppy school is for the Great Danes to help develop good habits right from the start. Wait until your Great Dane is at least 6 months old before putting him through any serious work.

Trainers with extensive experience and knowledge can deal with just about any behavior problems your pup might come up with.

Choose a trainer who is purposeful and patient. The well-trained Great Dane is a sight to behold going through his paces in the class. Their innate intelligence makes many Great Danes great successes in the obedience ring.

Of more importance is for you as owner to continue to practice the obedience lessons with your Great Dane.

They will best remember the lessons when you incorporate them into your everyday routines with your dog.

For example you can tell your pup to “heel” while he follows you around the house, and to “sit” and “stay” while you prepare his dinner. As your wake up greeting in the morning he can do a “roll over”. Tell him to “go find the ball” while you get dressed and “go get the leash” before you go for walks together.

### Great Dane school checklist

- You're the pack leader, so start early. If your Great Dane puppy needs extra work, consult a trainer. Time invested in training your pup will pay off in companionship for the rest of your Great Dane's life.
- Whether choosing a private individual or a franchise, don't gauge quality by price. A competent, experienced trainer may be very reasonable in price.
- Trust your initial impression of the trainer. It probably is valid.
- Check your puppy's tail; it should be wagging. Is your Great Dane comfortable? Does he like the trainer?

- Check out the training course and methodology. What and how do they teach? Do they cover everything you want your Great Dane to learn?
- Check experience and credentials. Is this a summer job for someone or a lifetime passion?
- Is the trainer patient? Different Great Dane puppies learn at different rates. Some are shy while others are bold. They may need different methods to succeed.
- Observe a class. Both people and dogs should be relaxed and having a good time - smiles and wagging tails all round.



## Reprimanding Your Great Dane

Talk to Great Danes like you would to children when they do something wrong.

Tell them “no” and show them immediately what the correct behavior should be and reward them for doing it right. After a few times they'll know how to do it right.

For example, tell him “NO” when you catch him chewing the shoes. Then immediately give him his own toys to chew and cheer him on to chew on the toys. Praise him for doing so.

Use sparingly those reprimanding words like “No,” “Stop that,” “get off” and “bad dog!” Instead use more praises to reward good behavior in your Great Danes and only then the reprimands will take on stronger meaning.

A correct reprimand is short, sharp and immediate.

Only reprimand when you catch your Great Dane doing something wrong, and punish only with your voice.

Hitting, kicking, slapping or spanking your Great Dane would create more problems and usually makes existing problems worse. You may just end up with a barking and chewing dog, one that is leery, hand-shy, fearful or aggressive.

If you really have to spank one with your hand, just slap him across the behind.



## Repetition And Rewarding Your Great Dane

Repetitions in doing the right things and rewarding your Great Dane every single time are crucial in training.

The more often he is rewarded, the better and quicker he will learn. Create situations where your Great Dane can get plenty of practice at doing the right things.

Be sure to praise when he does a good job.

This is simple but not always easy to do. Bad behaviors like biting, constant yelping and barking and tearing the house apart get our immediate notice. What we easily forget to acknowledge are the good parts - when the Great Dane is lying down quietly, chewing on his own toys, leaving the carpet unsoiled.

Praise and reward are the most important part of maintaining your Great Dane's good behavior and preventing him from getting into trouble.



# Unwanted Great Dane Behavior And How To Cure It

Training your Great Dane is relatively straightforward. Great Danes are intelligent and helped by their instincts begin to learn behavior patterns which are normal for them or make their lives easier but which are not acceptable to humans.

In this section you will find out about the most common of these behaviors which, as a human, you see as problems but your Great Dane sees as fun, normal or making his life easier.

There are 4 key things to remember when curing unwanted behavior:

1. Remember your Great Dane is a dog, so don't expect him to behave like a human
2. Be consistent
3. Be consistent
4. Be consistent

Lack of consistency is the biggest source of failure in adapting a Great Danes behavior.

For example: If you spend time working to stop him begging but the children drop food on the floor he will continue to beg. As he will if Grandma sneaks tip bit under the table when no one is looking.

So remember BE CONSITANT!





## Excessive Barking

Great Danes bark to communicate. The key to managing this behavior lies in determining the cause, then offering a quieter alternative.

### Why Great Danes bark

It's a fact of life that most dogs bark. Some breeds bark more than others. Some barking is necessary and useful ("There is someone at the door.") and other barking is just plain annoying. When your Great Dane barks, he or she may be communicating:

- I need exercise
- I'm bored
- I need to go outside.
- I hear something
- I'm home alone
- Pay attention to me right now!

### How to solve the problem

If you think your Great Dane needs something like exercise or water in his bowl, call him to you. Have him sit, praise him and only then do what needs doing; otherwise you'll be rewarding barking, which can lead to more barking. If your Great Dane or puppy's needs are met and he's just barking to bark, try this:

- Start by saying "quiet" in a calm but firm tone.
- If he stops barking, praise him and give him a treat, preferably a kibble of his food. Good dog!
- If he does not stop barking (and many Great Danes won't at first), clip his leash on and call him to you.
- Back away from whatever he is barking at and keep calling until he focuses on you. Good dog! Now praise and offer a food reward.

You can also try a mild aversive like a stream of water from a plant mister. If your Great Dane is barking at the window, say 'quiet,' spray your dog (who should stop in surprise), call him to you and praise him.

After he looks at you and gets rewarded, have him sit or down (calmly help him obey if you need to) then offer more praise! A Great Dane who learns to stop barking, come to you and lie down is a pretty easy dog to live with and that's a fine goal to work toward.

Leave a radio on for your Great Dane if he barks when left alone. This is good company for him and helps drown out outside noises.

### Do's and don'ts

- Do make sure your dog is getting plenty of exercise and training everyday. A bored dog is more likely to bark.
- Don't leave your dog alone in the backyard for long periods; that can cause many dogs to bark.

Please remember — any action to stop barking must be made while your Great Dane is barking. After-the-fact attempts at correction will only confuse your dog. Use a calm, firm voice. Avoid yelling, which can be stressful and upsetting to your dog.



## Begging

Dogs beg for food, attention, or other things they want because someone has taught them begging works. We teach dogs to beg by giving them what they want when they do so. The best solution is never to start rewarding begging in the first place, but if it's too late for that, there are ways to correct this behavior.

### Why Great Danes beg

Great Danes beg because it works. The dog has learned that whenever it whines, barks, or begs in any way, the human hands out food or attention. You are training your dog to beg every time you:

- Slip a piece of food under the table in response to begging.
- Get up at night to check on a whining dog.
- Do what the dog wants in response to its pleading eyes or insistent whining.

### Correcting begging behavior

Dogs seldom repeat behavior that doesn't pay off; so if begging stops paying off, it will stop -- eventually.

Never feed your Great Dane from the table. In addition to avoiding that perpetual beg, it also supports your position as the leader – for dogs, leaders control the food. If your Great Dane is already begging, consider crating him elsewhere when you eat.

Feed your Great Dane puppy away from where you eat so there is no confusion.

When your Great Dane whines for any reason other than to go outside, just ignore him. If you cannot ignore him, give him other commands like ‘come,’ ‘sit’ or ‘down’ and praise and reward him for those. This will give him something positive to do and reminds him you’re the leader in a non-confrontational way.

### Do's and don'ts

The most important thing is consistency. If you surrender to your frustration after your Great Dane has spent half an hour begging, you’ve simply taught him to beg for at least half an hour. Instead, train your dog to do what you want. Reward your dog when quiet and well behaved and eventually he will be quieter and better behaved.



## Boredom

Although Great Danes are creatures of habit, they still crave exercise – both physical and mental. If you don't provide it for them, they can get bored and start to entertain themselves – often by doing things you don't like.

### When Great Danes are bored

Bored Great Danes may:

- Dig
- Chew
- Run away
- Bark or otherwise try to get your attention
- Harass the cat, annoy you, "lose" the ball under the couch repeatedly, lick/chew themselves, etc.

### What to do about it

If you suspect your Great Dane may be suffering from boredom, whether or not problem behaviors are present, you may want to:

Make a list of simple "tricks" to teach your dog, and try to teach a new trick every few weeks.

Keep a well-stocked box of dog toys (out of view) to provide diversion when it is needed. Rotate toys every few days, keeping 3-4 out at all times.

Introduce food-dispensing toys to your Great Dane.

Make sure your Great Dane gets plenty of exercise. Simply hanging around in the back yard may not be enough. Do things with your dog such as take long walks or play fetch.

Interact with your Great Dane and offer praise and a kibble of food for good behavior. See how many good behaviors you can reward in a day.

When possible, take your Great Dane along when visiting friends or running errands.

**Remember...**

Your Great Dane's lifestyle influences his behavior. Regular walks or play periods with your dog and praise for tricks will make your dog's life fun and stimulating. A happy Great Dane is less likely to develop annoying behavior problems.



## Chewing

Chewing is normal for Great Danes, but it can cause problems when your shoes, books or furniture are the targets. Correcting problem chewing is often simply a matter of preventing unwanted chewing while encouraging your Great Dane to chew appropriate dog toys. If chewing only happens when left alone, try confinement (see Crate Training), It may also be a sign of Separation Anxiety or Boredom.

### Why Great Danes chew

Chewing is usually a healthy, normal thing to do when it isn't destructive.

Great Danes chew for many reasons:

- To release pent-up energy.
- Stress.
- Teething, which generally occurs between three and six months of age.
- Because the simply finds chewing enjoyable.

Keep in mind that some behavior that looks like chewing or biting is actually exploratory 'mouthing.' Great Danes learn about an object's feel and texture with their mouths in the way people learn those things by feeling with their hands.

### Correcting inappropriate chewing

Buy appropriate chew toys. Then, when you see your Great Dane chewing something inappropriate:

- Say "no" or "eh" in a low voice. (It's a sound similar to a mother's growl, which your puppy will take as a sign of disapproval)
- If your Great Dane stops to look at you, praise and give your puppy a preferred chew toy. Do not use old shoes, socks or gloves, as that will actually train your dog to chew your things.
- Praise your dog whenever you see him chewing a dog toy. This teaches your Great Dane that it is not chewing that is wrong – just chewing the wrong things.
- Make sure Great Dane puppies have chew toys available at all times, especially when teething.
- When possible, put items your Great Dane likes to chew away or out of reach. If you can't, keep your dog out of the area with gates or by

closing doors.

- When you aren't home, confine your Great Dane in a safe area or crate your dog.
- Increase his exercise and his training.

### Do's and don'ts

- Do provide lots of good, solid dog toys for chewing.
- Do prevent problems by supervising your dog closely and exercising him often.
- Do stay calm. If you catch your Great Dane chewing something other than a dog toy do as suggested above.
- Don't blame the Great Dane for being a dog – give him toys to chew, reward him for chewing those, and prevent access to other items.



## Digging

Digging can be annoying. In some cases it can be 'hardwired' into a Great Dane's personality. Other times it's a learned behavior or it can also be a sign that your dog needs something. Watch when and where your Great Dane digs — that will give you clues to why your dog is digging and how to manage, prevent, or control it.

### Why Great Danes dig

- Dogs dig for many reasons:
- In summer, lying in a cool hole brings relief from the heat.
- Burying treasure, such as a bone.
- Investigating an interesting smell – in fact, terriers are 'hardwired' to dig up moles and other rodents
- Releasing pent-up energy or alleviating boredom.

## How to deal with digging Great Danes

If you'd like to stop your Great Dane from digging, there are two ways to approach it: Redirect the behavior to a more desirable place or try to stop it entirely. You may want to try a combination of these ideas:

In warm weather, make sure your Great Dane has a cool, shady spot to rest and plenty of water – better yet, bring your dog indoors.

To discourage future digs, bury a little of your Great Dane's waste just below the surface when you fill in the hole. If your dog digs in the same spot, he will find the waste. This often is enough to discourage digging.

If you catch your Great Dane in the act of inappropriate digging, a sharp 'Leave It!' followed by a command such as 'Come' and praise for compliance will help distract and refocus your dog.

Make sure your Great Dane gets plenty of exercise and time with you. Being alone in the backyard does not qualify as exercise. Walks, games of fetch, and romps with other dogs will tire your dog out.

Do not leave your Great Dane outside unattended for long periods - that invites digging. If he must be left outside for a time, be sure to provide plenty of toys.

To redirect the behavior, you can build a sandbox for your dog. Bury toys just under the surface and reward your dog when he digs in the right area and finds his treasure.

## Do's and don'ts

- Do give your Great Dane plenty of exercise every day.
- Do keep him with you as much as possible.
- Do use commands to direct your dog to behaviors you want then reward him.
- Don't punish your Great Dane when you find holes. Your dog won't associate the punishment with the crime.





## Disgusting Habits

Dogs do a number of things that people find disgusting – but for the most part, these things are more annoying to humans than they are bad for dogs.

### Disgusting things Great Danes do

- Great Danes may eat feces – their own or another animal's – out of hunger, boredom, curiosity or, most appalling to us, they appear to just plain like it.
- Great Danes lick their crotches during grooming and sniff each other's crotches during normal greeting.
- Great Danes like rolling in smelly things – dead fish, garbage, anything they can find.

### What you can do

These habits, while upsetting to humans, aren't typically dangerous to dogs. Still, in the interest of having a well-mannered Great Dane that is welcome in the house, you can try to control these behaviors or at least learn how to deal with them.

Try to keep your Great Dane healthy and entertained to alleviate hunger and boredom.

Pick up waste that is left in the yard every time you take your Great Dane outdoors.

Coat feces with a bitter flavor to create a negative memory for your dog — your Great Dane will be more likely to avoid it in the future. (Be sure to provide plenty of fresh, clean drinking water so your dog can get some quick relief.)

Licking is part of a normal grooming routine, but excessive licking could indicate an infection or irritation. If you're not sure, ask your veterinarian.

A well-trained Great Dane who obeys your command to 'come' can be steered clear of tempting targets to roll in.

If your Great Dane does get smelly, simply bathe him and try to prevent him from rolling in the future by keeping him on a lead, removing the attractive item, and working hard on his 'leave it' and 'come' commands.

## Do's and don'ts

- Do pick up after your dog.
- Don't leave him off-leash in an area where there are temptations.
- Do work daily on his basic training so he'll respond reliably.
- Don't punish your Great Dane for being a dog – he won't understand.



## Fearfulness

The world can be a scary place to a Great Dane, but it needn't be. Here are some common fears and things you can do – and things you shouldn't do.

### What to do

Act the way you want your Great Dane to act. So if you want him to be happy and calm, act happy and calm. No matter what the source of the fear, do NOT try to comfort your dog through snuggling, petting, or saying it's OK. It may seem like the most natural thing in the world, but your tone of voice and body language are actually telling your Great Dane that there is something to fear. Instead, find fun distractions, like fetch or other games. Create positive experiences and reasons for your dog to feel good. Some pointers about common fears:

### Fear of storms

**The Cause:** Most often, it's the strange sounds that accompany storms. Howling wind, lashing rain, booming thunder (made worse by the bright flashes of lightning), all these are much louder and scarier to dogs.

**The Solution:** A small, secure "den" like a crate can be comforting. Try turning on a radio or TV; the noise may take the shock out of the boom of thunder. Or you can try playing with your Great Dane or try a training session – it'll distract your dog and give you plenty of chances to reward your dog, creating a positive experience. If this doesn't calm your dog, please speak to your veterinarian.

### Fear of dogs

**The Cause:** Your Great Dane may see other dogs as a threat.

**The Solution:** The best solution is experience. Bring your Great Dane into contact with other friendly, dog-savvy dogs early and often; a training class is a

great way to do this, since it's neutral territory and the dogs are under control. Trips to the dog park should be done with caution, as often there are adolescent, excitable dogs there. Some Great Danes will thrive. Others will be overwhelmed and frightened. Watch your dog and see if he is having fun or is scared. Meeting plenty of friendly dogs should also help make your pet more comfortable.

## Fear of people

**The Cause:** Your Great Dane may see people as threats, either because your dog has not had enough socialization with enough different people, had frightening experiences with some people or, possibly, has a genetic predisposition to shyness.

**The Solution:** Experience will help. Always allow your Great Dane to approach the person, do not allow the person to reach for your frightened dog. Do not drag your dog up to anyone - ever. Instead, give your dog treats – preferably a kibble of dog food, – when new people are around. As he gets braver, let people toss your dog a piece of food so that meeting new people becomes a good experience. Never, ever, attempt to force a frightened Great Dane to take a treat from or meet a new person. By going slowly, allowing your Great Dane to set the pace and using plenty of food rewards, your dog should learn to enjoy the company of people. If you're not seeing progress, have any concerns, have an aggressive dog or see growling, lunging, or cowering/hiding, please seek the guidance of a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional.

## Fear of veterinarians

**The Cause:** First, establish that the fear IS of the veterinarian, and not people in general. If you do see behaviors at the veterinarian's office that you don't see otherwise, it could be sensory overload at the smell of so many other animals, or perhaps your Great Dane has bad associations due to shots or other treatment.

**The Solution:** Try to make the experience good in general. Bring a favorite toy for entertainment and include a trip to the park or other positive experiences. Bring food kibbles and ask your veterinarian and the staff to give pieces to your Great Dane before, during and after the visit is complete so your dog has a positive association.

## Remember:

You set the tone. If you're nervous and worried, your Great Dane will be, too. Making sure your dog is used to other animals (for example, by attending a dog training class) can help too.



## Outside Marking

When your Great Dane stops for a quick 'potty break' at every tree, bush and streetlight, what you're seeing is marking behavior. Depending on where you live and your dog, this may be behavior you want to stop.

### Why Great Danes mark

Great Danes "mark" to establish territory. Male Great Danes lift their legs to mark, usually selecting upright 'targets.' Each dog has a unique smell that the other dogs' sensitive noses can identify. So these marks act as a personal calling card, telling other dogs he has spoken for this territory.

### Why correct marking behavior?

There are two good reasons to put a stop to marking:

1. Great Danes who mark frequently often have an attitude problem. Getting control of the marking often helps you get control over other problems as well.
2. If you live in an area with a lot of dogs, marking can lead to conflict. When dogs who have claimed the same area meet on the street, each dog can try to drive off the "intruder."

### How to correct marking

In the best of all worlds, don't let your Great Dane start. But if you have, the sooner you retrain your dog, the easier it will be.

First, neuter your male Great Dane. Doing so early usually prevents problem leg lifting and, done at any age, will help to minimize this behavior.

Encourage your Great Dane to eliminate in one spot in your yard before you start your walk. Do this by walking back and forth in that area. When he urinates, praise him then go for a larger stroll. This rewards quick emptying with exploration.

If your dog tries to mark during your walk, keep walking while saying, "Let's go, Heel!" in a happy tone of voice. If you keep moving and praise him for coming with you, you can prevent persistent lifting entirely.

If your Great Dane is lifting his leg in the house, please seek the assistance of a qualified dog trainer or behaviorist.



## Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is defined as your Great Dane being greatly distressed whenever you leave, every time you leave. Scratching at the door, chewing things up, housetraining mistakes, barking hysterically and generally being extremely upset are a few of the signs. Most Great Danes want to be with their humans as much as possible. Great Danes that haven't been taught how to stay alone calmly may exhibit unwanted behaviors. Gradually adjusting dogs to being alone is the best approach.

Most puppies and some dogs experience a level of anxiety when left alone, even for very short periods of time. Most puppies learn that when they are left alone, nothing really bad happens to them, they are still alive, and their "people" come back. They learn how to entertain themselves while alone and gain confidence in their ability to be alone. As they grow up and gain confidence in themselves, their "people" can leave them for longer periods of time.

Some dogs, for various reasons, do not gain confidence in themselves. Some dogs are left alone too long when they are puppies and they become traumatized by the event. Other dogs are neglected or abused and therefore have a low self-esteem. These dogs can be bounced around from owner to owner and usually end up in an animal shelter. After they are adopted to well-meaning people they can still carry their low self-esteem and exhibit their learned behavior of separation anxiety. Other dogs for unknown reasons have a low tolerance for anxiety. And lastly, any dog can become traumatized unbeknownst to their "people" by some event and can spontaneously begin to experience separation anxiety.

All of these types of dogs can show profound anxiety when being left alone, or simply out of eye-sight of their "people." The process of teaching them self-confidence and the ability to entertain themselves can be time consuming and requires a lot of patience and positive reinforcement. Here's how to do it:

### Preventing separation anxiety

It's good for your Great Dane or puppy to be comfortable when home alone. You can help him learn this if you take a little time and use these simple steps.

Begin by changing your "leaving" routine. Great Danes that exhibit separation anxiety usually begin to get anxious long before you walk out the door. Most people have a set "leaving" routine that they go through before leaving the house. They put their shoes on, close the windows, lock the doors, jingle the car keys, etc. Dogs learn this routine very quickly and if they already get anxious from being left alone, this long, drawn out "leaving" routine can make matters worse.

When you leave the house, do so promptly. When you leave, say "Take care of the house." Don't make a big deal out of leaving, just start to teach them a phrase that means, "I'll be gone, but I'll be back." Then, when you leave, turn around and come back in after about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Say hello to your dog in a low-key manner and go about your day. You need to be low-key so that you teach your dog to be low-key. If you are overly anxious about leaving or coming home you will be conditioning your dog to be anxious as well.

The first day, you will leave and come back about a dozen times. Each time you leave, increase the time you are gone: 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 7 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, etc. Any time you come home and your dog was exhibiting his anxious behavior (chewing, barking, etc.) cut the time you leave in half next time. If he's still experiencing separation anxiety, cut your time in half again! Once your dog is no longer anxious, start increasing the times again.

Because of the time and commitment involved in these exercises, it is best if do this on your vacation time for the first week or until you build up to about 4 hours of being gone with no anxiety from your dog. If vacation time is impossible, then start on Friday afternoon or evening, and make this your primary activity for the whole weekend. Then repeat this again the following weekend, varying the time you are gone. Leave for 30 minutes, then for 5 minutes, then for 10 minutes, then for 2 hours, etc.

Great Danes are social animals, and any Great Dane that spends 8-10 hours a day, everyday all alone may begin to exhibit obsessive behaviors that may or may not develop into separation anxiety. A dog that experiences separation anxiety usually does his damage as soon as (or very shortly after) you leave the house. A dog that is bored and lonely will become destructive after a few hours (usually 4-6) of being left alone.

Another great confidence builder for Great Danes is any type of doggie class. Even if your Great Dane knows all the obedience commands, he will benefit from a class situation. Taking your dog to a doggie class increases his confidence in being able to handle new situations. It also increases his confidence in you as "leader."

Most importantly, it gives him the opportunity to socialize with other dogs and people, and spend quality time you.

If your Great Dane is an "only" dog it is possible that this exacerbates his separation anxiety. Some Great Danes that do not have canine companionship become overly dependent on their humans. Sometimes referred to as "Velcro-dogs" (a dog that seems to stick to you where ever you go), they experience a great amount of stress whenever they are not accompanied by a human. Although not recommended as a cure-all, you may want to consider getting

another dog or puppy for companionship. Another wonderful option is to find a playmate for your Great Dane.

A weekly visit to or from a doggie-playmate's house can be very beneficial to "only" dogs (even those that do not suffer from separation anxiety). Great Danes benefit greatly from canine companionship. Schedule a playtime for your dog, with another dog that he likes, once or twice a week.

Be sure to spend daily quality time with your Great Dane. One-on-one time spent with your dog for 5 - 20 minutes a day can help him feel more secure in his environment as well as help strengthen the bond between you both.

Even if you have a Velcro-dog, quality, one-on-one time where your attention is focused on your dog is essential. This quality time should not consist of babying, stroking, or cuddling. Instead, it should consist of doing things to build a strong master/dog relationship and bolster the confidence of your Great Dane. Fun obedience work using positive reinforcement, interspersed with fun games of fetch, chase, and hide & seek can be very beneficial for the psychological well-being of your Great Dane.

### Using a crate

A crate is another good way to prevent or cure separation anxiety in Great Danes.

- Start by introducing your dog to his crate.
- Crate him for short periods while you are present. Gradually increase the time crated. Reward quiet behavior with calm praise and perhaps a treat such as a piece of dog food (a healthier option than most treats).
- Start leaving your puppy alone – start with just a few minutes at a time, if possible.
- Gradually increase the time spent alone.
- Limit your attention when you are home so it isn't such a shock when you leave.
- Reward your Great Dane with a piece of food and attention when he lies quietly away from you.

Most Great Danes don't need to be crated forever, but don't rush freedom. Most Great Danes aren't ready to be given unsupervised freedom in your home until they are a year-and-a-half or older.

For those of you who work, consider hiring a walker or neighbor to give your Great Dane a midday break. Keeping your schedule similar on weekends as on workdays can help make things easier for your dog.

Exercise - and plenty of it - helps dogs who must be alone long hours.

### Do's and don'ts

Do make leaving and arriving uneventful. If you make leaving a big production – lots of hugs and goodbyes or asking if he'll miss you – your Great Dane will assume it's a big deal.

When you return, don't go directly to his crate or room and make a fuss except if your Great Dane is a young pup or has been left for many hours. In those cases, take him right out as he may really need to relieve himself and making him wait can lead to a wet crate. If you can, wait until your dog is calm and quiet, then casually go greet him and praise him for being calm and quiet.

Always give your Great Dane puppy an opportunity to eliminate prior to crating him and provide him with an appropriate chew toy.

### Signs of serious separation anxiety

Some Great Danes, especially puppies, may whine or cry a little when left alone. True separation anxiety is defined as destructive or disruptive behavior, including tearing up the room, constant barking and whining, or housetraining mistakes every time you leave – often starting immediately after you leave. For cases where the strategy above doesn't work, you may want to consult a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional.



## Whining

In the middle of the night, at the dinner table, at the door – whining is annoying. Learn what whining means and how to correct it.

### Why Great Danes whine

People often try to comfort whining dogs. But in reality, your Great Dane is often demanding something – and when you give it, you've just taught him that whining works!

- Whining can mean many things, but it almost always means your dog



wants something:

- A Great Dane whining when you are sitting down to eat is probably saying, 'Give me your food.'
- A Great Dane whining at the back door or bedroom door is probably saying, 'I want to come in.'
- A Great Dane whining in his kennel or crate at night is probably saying, 'I want out now!'
- A housetrained Great Dane whining while inside may be saying, 'I need to go outside!'

### What to do

What you want to do is establish when whining is OK (rarely) and when it is not okay (most of the time). When your Great Dane understands that, he's less likely to whine. As always, the following tips are more effective the sooner you do them:

- If your Great Dane is whining to go out and go to the bathroom, be sure to comply. Go out, take care of business, and come back in with no play.
- In all other cases of whining, be strong. Don't give in.
- When your Great Dane whines, give him something productive to do like 'sit' or 'down' - have him do several commands in a row and then praise him calmly.
- Try to notice the sweet sounds of silence and praise your Great Dane then. If he gets attention for being quiet, he should start weaning off the whining.
- Make your Great Dane's crate a comfortable den so your dog will like time there. Make it cozy and include toys. Crate him for short periods, often, so he learns to accept it calmly.
- If your Great Dane suddenly starts whining "out of the blue," take him to the veterinarian. He may be in pain.

### What NOT to do

Don't give in! Every time your Great Dane gets what he wants when he whines, you teach him that whining works. Like people, dogs do what works so he'll whine more and longer next time. Do it enough times and your Great Dane will view whining as the best way to get what he wants. Also, avoid giving in after holding out for a long time. If your dog or new puppy whines when left alone for the night, and you let him whine for three hours and then give in, your Great Dane will think that whining for three hours is the best way to get your attention (which is what your pup wanted in the first place.)



# Great Dane Toys And Games

Foods, treats or praise will bring out the best responses from your Great Danes during training.

Treats can come in the form of their favorite food, toy or something the Great Dane really loves to do.

Whenever practicing any obedience training and upon finishing, one owner and his Great Dane will have a big play time by running and throwing his favorite toys. Other Great Danes prefer to go for rides, enjoying the wind in their faces, or even playing football!

Some Great Danes will take the commands in training with great joy knowing that they will get something to eat!

Some favorites are ice cream, cheese, ham and chicken. One Great Dane fancies a handful of ice cubes to crunch on though he's not thirsty.

The all time dog favorites of fetching and hide and seek games can be made more treasured using your Great Dane's favorite ball or toy, and giving him plenty of stroking in between throws.



## Exercise And Play

Great Danes typically need 30-45 minutes of exercise a day whether it is a brisk walk, a jog, or chasing a ball.

Outdoor space is essential for Great Danes. In the coldest part of the winter, that can be a challenge. Always have your dog's health evaluated by his veterinarian before you begin an exercise program.

Always check with your veterinarian before starting a new and demanding activity with your Great Dane. Once you get the go ahead - have fun!

Some ways to make exercise and play a part of your dog's life:

Check with breeders and dog clubs for direction. Ask when the next obedience or agility classes will start and enter your Great Dane just for the fun of it.

Even if he is already trained, attending a refresher class will give him an

opportunity to interact with other dogs and focus some of his energy into an appropriate behavior.

In the winter, wrap up warm and go for a walk. Even a short walk is preferable to no walk. Find a place with a windbreak and dress appropriately.

Treadmills are trendy for people and can be fun for dogs. You can teach your dog how to walk on the treadmill. Don't ever leave your Great Dane unattended, don't allow the leash to dangle where it could tangle and, like you, build up his endurance slowly.

Have your veterinarian instruct you how to detect possible warning signs, which may indicate your Great Dane has exercised too much.

## Do

Consider your Great Dane's needs and present physical condition. Leisurely walks may be best for an older Great Dane while a young adult dog will have ample energy for a vigorous exercise program. Great Dane puppies should not stress their growing bones, joints or muscles through excessive jumping or strenuous exercise. Be sensible about what you ask your Great Dane to do. Hard games of fetch or catching a flying disc burn off a lot of steam, but they also stress a dog's joints to the maximum.

Go slow! If you have not exercised your Great Dane regularly and decide to launch a regular exercise program, begin with short periods of activity at slow speeds and gradually increase the time, speed and distance.

Begin walking or running your Great Dane on soft surfaces such as dirt, sand or grass until his pads toughen. Keep your dog's nails trimmed so they won't tear as he runs.

Keep your Great Dane on a leash; it gives you control when walking or running.

If you exercise at night, place a reflective collar on your Great Dane, use a bright colored leash and wear white or light-colored clothing so the two of you can be seen.

Check your Great Dane's feet for the presence of burrs, grass, thorns, rocks or ice and snow, all of which should be removed immediately.

Check carefully for ticks after exercising outdoors. Read more about ticks.

Obey local laws about cleaning up after your dog and using a leash. Your police department or animal control department can tell you more about laws in your area.

## Don't

Exercise your Great Dane immediately before or after he has eaten; a full stomach may cause digestive upsets. Provide only small amounts of water before and directly after exercise.

Go out in the noonday sun. Running in the heat is dangerous for Great Danes, Just because he is willing to jog with you in 90-degree heat doesn't mean it is safe for him to do so.

Raise a couch potato. Great Danes can live longer, healthier lives if kept lean and fit. If you love your dog, you'll exercise him.



## Games To Play With Great Dane Puppies

Games are fun, but they can also teach your Great Dane puppy valuable skills like retrieving, searching, and obedience. Depending on your puppy's personality and temperament, you can teach your puppy variations of games as vast as your imagination.

Fetch is a favorite game and can be useful for reinforcing the "coming when called" command, as well as teaching your puppy to bring the newspaper or your slippers if you are so inclined.

Find-the-toy type games teach your puppy to rely on his sense of smell and use his brain. They can also prepare your puppy for tracking.

Tug is a natural instinct but be careful. When you remember that each game teaches your Great Dane something, you will realize that tug teaches your Great Dane to fight with you. If your puppy has a dominant streak the game may get out of hand. Make sure you are the one to start and finish this game and that your puppy drops the toy on command.

Agility games are a great way to burn off extra calories and energy. They also increase your puppy's coordination and confidence. Great Danes love the challenge of jumping and negotiating obstacles as well as getting the praise you give when they do well. But before you start, be sure to find a trainer who understands that Great Dane puppies should not stress their growing bones, joints or muscles through excessive jumping or strenuous exercise.

In the end, games are about a connection between you and your puppy. Sure, your puppy has toys that are fun and provide entertainment. But games include

you, and that's the best as far as your puppy is concerned.



## Dog Sports

Dog sports are increasing in popularity every year. More and more events are being televised, from agility contests to dog shows, and there really is something for every dog (and person) to participate in and enjoy.

Great Danes may not be the most agile of creatures but they will always enjoy taking part!

### Choosing a Sport

In order to choose a sport, you have to know a little about each one. Here's a short description of some of the more common dog events:

#### Agility

Dogs race over, through and around obstacles as quickly as possible with the human keeping up and giving the directions. Most dogs and people can enjoy learning the basics of this sport even if competition is not a goal. Different size dogs jump different height jumps, so many toy breeds can compete with great success. Read more about Agility Courses.

#### Flyball

A canine relay race where a dog races over a series of jumps, grabs a tennis ball and races back. When one dog crosses the finish line, the next dog in the team starts. Jump size is set for the shortest member of the team, so most teams include a fast, small dog.

#### Big Air/Diving Dog

A relatively new event, this sport involves a dog racing down a dock and leaping into the water for a thrown object. The longest leap wins.

#### Flying Disc

This is a sport for truly athletic dogs. Leaping in the air and vaulting off the handler's back makes for great entertainment, but these moves are extremely demanding. The dog is landing hard and often, twisting and turning in every direction, making injury a real risk. Make sure your veterinarian approves before

starting.

### Conformation

This is what most people think of when they hear “dog show” – a contest to see which purebred dog most closely conforms to its breed standard. Some of the largest shows are now televised, so everyone can enjoy the glamour of these events.

### Obedience

While many of us struggle to get our dogs to sit, obedience competitors teach their dogs a complex series of behaviors on which they are judged.

### Other activities

There are numerous other sports in which to participate: pet assisted therapy, ski-joring, tracking, herding, Rally-O, dancing with dogs, hunt tests, backpacking, carting, swim tests, earth dog tests, sledding and much, much more are all available. Conduct a little research, invest your time and energy in training and you and your dog can join in the fun.

## Things to Consider

### Age

Great Danes need to be fully mature to start doing strenuous physical activity, but do not let that stop you from starting to teach your pup the basics of the sport you’re interested in early. Just work with a sensible trainer and take things easy until your veterinarian tells you it is safe for your Great Dane to compete.

### Soundness

A strong body is a requirement for many sports. No matter what your dream is, if your Great Dane isn’t built for it or doesn’t enjoy it, then it is time to adjust your plans. You and your dog are a team. It is your job to make sure your Great Dane is safe, pain-free and happy.

### Time to devote

The more strenuous the sport, the more time is needed both for training and for conditioning your Great Dane to peak physical condition. Training or competing with a dog that is not in top physical form can lead to injury. So your choices are to devote the time needed to succeed, participate in a less intense way or find

another sport that you can more easily work into your schedule.

Few things are as rewarding as competing with your Great Dane, having all your months and years of training come together seamlessly so you both do your best. Win or lose, such moments are among the rewards of Great Dane ownership.



## Good Toys For A Great Dane Puppy

One of your Great Dane puppy's "jobs" is to chew. It may relieve some of the pain of teething, it may be the practice of feeding skills, it may be just something to do, but chewing is a huge part of puppy's first year. Your job is to supply appropriate toys for chewing so he won't choose your shoes.

Squeaky toys, rattling toys, and those with bells are great fun. Most such toys are also destructible, so monitor your puppy if he has moved into a destructive phase. Squeakers and nylon pieces are better in the toy and as part of the toy than in your puppy - so don't let him chew and swallow any pieces.

Toys made of hard rubber are sturdy and come in various shapes and sizes. Insert a biscuit treat or peanut butter into rubber toys with holes, and puppy will be highly entertained. To aid in cleaning puppy's teeth, choose dental toys or chews that are made with bumps and grooves.

Be sure to rotate the toys puppy plays with each week. Otherwise, he may get bored with them and ignore them in favor of something new, like the sheetrock or your sneakers.

Favorite Great Dane toys include:

- Tennis balls
- Strong rubber chew toys
- Soft Frisbees
- Latex or vinyl squeaky toys
- And just about any other safe chewing item

As a word of caution, when purchasing and giving toys to your Great Dane, make sure you pay close attention to the condition of the toy. Remember, Great Danes have strong teeth and jaws and can chew through just about anything; you won't want your dog ingesting or choking on any small chewed off pieces.





# Great Danes As Show Dogs

Aside from their outstanding sporting characteristics, Great Danes are known to also be excellent show dogs, and frequently win in show rings. The reason is due to the fact that the Great Dane has impeccable balance and grace that allow it to move around with very little effort.

On top of that, the Great Dane is considered to be one of the easiest dogs to train, and has a pleasant temperament, which also makes it the ideal show dog.

Of course, there is more to becoming a show dog than simply becoming a registered member at an association, or training and grooming a Great Dane. All show dogs, depending on their breed, have to meet certain qualifications designated to their individual Standard In order for them to even be considered.

For instance, a Great Dane can be disqualified if:

- Its nose is without color or is mostly pink
- Its eye rims have no color
- It has a height difference different to that of the prescribed standard
- The coat color is a combination of the basic three colors - yellow, black or chocolate - or are another color
- Its tail docks or is unnaturally carried

For the most part, Great Dane show dogs in the UK and the US follow the same basic qualification rules; expect that in England a Great Dane must also have a working certificate in order to be considered a bench show champion.



# Feeding Your Great Dane

Giving your Great Dane a raw, natural diet (as opposed to commercially prepared one) makes the feeding task flexible and you get to control the quality of the food your Great Dane is getting.

The Biologically Appropriate Raw Food or “BARF” diet is easy to prepare. You are basically feeding him “bones and raw food”, adding in or taking out supplement as needed.

It is better to first understand the principles behind this feeding method. And there are excellent reference books available on this subject matter.

Basically, the BARF diet is made up of raw meat and raw meaty bones, raw processed vegetables plus dairy products, eggs, fish, offal, muscle meats, fruit and maybe some supplements. It is a very balanced diet and you get to control the ingredients as well as the quality. Some people leave out dairy products or grains.

On the other hand, an owner suggests that you keep a Great Dane healthy with occasional yogurt treats.

Great Danes tend to have lots of food allergies. One owner put an ailing and lethargic Great Dane on a strictly venison diet and your dog finally thrived, gained weight and became very active.

There is also a recent concern about eating a large amount of grapes or raisins, since they can be toxic to dogs, leading to acute kidney failure.

The reports concerning this grape/raisin poisoning have only just surfaced and the information is still sketchy at best. The Animal Poison Control Center in the US is investigating this new medical development.

Some questions remaining to be answered are:

- How much grapes or raisins eaten could become toxic to your dog?
- What is the toxic substance?
- How does it affect the kidney?

To be safe, have your veterinarian check your Great Dane if he has eaten a large amount of grapes or raisins because a healthy kidney is key to its survival.



## More On Choosing Dog Food For Your Great Dane

Even before your Great Dane comes home, you should decide on a dog food. It has to be healthy, tasty and it has to fit your lifestyle.

### Nutritional claims

Read the label for nutritional claims.

Look for life stage claims. For example, a puppy food should say it is complete and balanced for "growth" or "all life stages". Foods balanced for "the maintenance of an adult dog" won't give a puppy enough nutrition.

### Types of food

There is a wide variety of commercially produced dog food available in a variety of styles. Choose the one that fits your needs, your Great Dane's needs and your budget.

Dry food is an extremely popular choice for Great Dane puppy owners. It tastes good, is easy to store, and has more nutrition per pound on a dry matter basis than other types. It also helps keep teeth clean.

Soft and moist food is increasing in popularity. Moist chunks are enjoyable for your dog to eat, meaning he's likely to eat all his food and get all the needed nutrition.

Canned foods are the most palatable for your Great Dane. However, due to their high water content, they contain less nutrition per pound of food, so you will need to feed your Great Dane a higher volume. Also watch for dental issues - soft foods don't scrape the teeth like dry diets.

### Guaranteed analysis

Look at the levels of calories, protein, fat, and other nutrients in a food declared on the package. You can compare these analyses between foods as long as they are foods of the same type; for example, all canned foods will have less protein per pound or cup than dry food because canned foods contain so much moisture, so in this case you need to compare them by daily feeding amount - you will feed more of the canned food per day. But you can compare dry to dry or canned to canned.

While this comparison might help you select in some circumstances - for example, you may want to feed an overweight dog a food with less calories per cup or a hardworking dog a food with more calories per cup - your best bet is to

use the nutritional claims and look for a food that is appropriate for your dog's life stage. More or less of a particular nutrient may be good or it may not - too much calcium can lead to bone problems, for example (read more about these types of nutritional balances in About Minerals).

### Other considerations

Since this is a decision you want to make once and stick with, consider other aspects of the food including:

- Flavor - does your dog seem to enjoy it?
- Availability - can you get your chosen food easily?
- Cost - does it fit comfortably in your monthly budget?
- Reputation - do you know people who have used and recommend the food? Is the manufacturer reputable?
- Special needs - if your dog has specific nutritional needs identified by a veterinarian, does this food meet those needs?
- With these guidelines, you can find the food that's right for you and your dog.



## Pet Food Labels

Pet food labels provide the pet owner with a great deal of information. But what do they mean? When evaluating potential diets for your Great Dane, you may want to know more about what you are reading. Here is a rundown of many of the types of information you may find on a dog food label.

### Caloric statement

Dog food labels may have a statement of the calorie content of the product. Calories are stated in terms of metabolizable kilocalories per kilogram (ME kcal/kg) of food and may also be expressed as calories per unit of household measure such as per cup or per can.

Manufacturers may determine the calorie content of their product through calculations based on laboratory analysis of the product or through feeding trial procedures established by AAFCO (The Association of American Feed Control Officials, an independent body that sets guidelines for the pet food industry.)

### Additives

Two types of additives are included in pet food products; those that are nutritional

and those that add other benefits.

Nutritional additives include vitamins, minerals, fats and amino acids. They permit the supplementation of a product to increase single nutrient levels without disturbing the levels of other nutrients in the diet.

An animal's body cannot distinguish between vitamins that occur in natural ingredients and those which are produced synthetically. The use of synthetic nutrients helps achieve the high degree of nutritional balance found in good-quality pet foods.

The pet food label lists a number of ingredients which do not necessarily provide nutrient benefits, but which do have a specific purpose in the diet. These types of additives are detailed below:

- **Antioxidants** - Ingredients such as mixed tocopherols are added to the fats in pet foods at extremely low levels to prevent rancidity and, thus, prevent the unpleasant odor, loss of palatability, and destruction of vitamins that can occur when fats go rancid.
- **Chemical preservatives** - Preservatives are used in semi-moist-type pet foods to prevent spoilage. These include such ingredients as propylene glycol, sorbic acid, and potassium sorbate. All ingredients of this type must be approved by the FDA for use and are identified as a preservative.
- **Flavoring agents** - Flavorings are a convenient way to make products more appealing to dogs. Some may have complicated chemical names, but others such as garlic and onion are also used as flavoring agents.
- **Coloring** - Colors are added to some pet foods to help maintain a consistent product appearance because the color of natural ingredients can vary, or to distinguish between flavors in a multi-particle food. Artificial colors used in pet foods are the same as those approved for use in human foods and are approved by the FDA.

## Feeding directions

Information in this section should also include the amount of food recommended, which will be a "rule of thumb" or a starting point. Actual feeding amounts will depend on age, activity, size, environment and body metabolism and is best determined by you observing your Great Dane's body condition.

Dog food labeled as complete and balanced for any or all life stages is required to list feeding directions for each lifestage declared on the product label. These directions are expressed in common terms and appear prominently on the label.

## Guaranteed analysis

Certain nutrient guarantees are required on the label of all pet foods. These are:

- % Crude protein (minimum amount)
- % Crude fat (minimum amount)
- % Crude fiber (maximum amount)
- % Moisture (maximum amount)

If the manufacturer desires to list any additional guarantees such as vitamins and minerals, in the units defined by AAFCO, these will be shown after moisture.

The reason for the word crude is that the minimum or maximum amount shown is determined by lab assay and is not the amount actually utilized by the animal. Consequently, figures given in the guaranteed analyses do not necessarily indicate nutritional balance or product quality.

## Ingredient listing

All ingredients used in the manufacture of the pet food shall be listed in the ingredient list on the label. The ingredients shall be listed in descending order of predominance by weight. No reference can be given to ingredient quality or grade in the ingredient list. The names of all ingredients must be shown in letters that are the same size, color and type.



## Nutrition For Great Dane Puppies

The nutritional needs of Great Dane puppies are greater than at any time in a Great Dane's life other than reproduction. Understanding what your puppy needs will help you make the right dietary choices.

### What happens

The puppy stage sets the foundation for a Great Dane's whole life. The length of this period can vary, the rule of thumb is 18 months for Great Danes. A lot of physical development happens in a very short time, including:

- Bones and joints growing to full size
- Muscles developing and growing
- Internal organs growing (this continues even after your dog appears to be full size)
- Immune system developing and learning to protect
- Cognitive development and brain growth

### Great Dane puppy's nutritional needs

Supporting that level of development – similar to what a human goes through from birth to 14 years of age – in just one or two years takes the right level of nutrition. This includes:

- **Protein** – A key building block of muscle, skin, coat, organs and other tissues. During this period of growth, a puppy needs abundant protein
- **Calcium and Phosphorus** – Necessary ingredients for healthy bones and teeth. They must be present in the correct ratios to grow bones and teeth correctly
- **Omega Fatty Acids, including Linoleic acid** – Provides complete and balanced nutrition, promotes a healthy immune system and helps keep your puppy's skin and coat healthy

These are not the only needs of a puppy, of course. What your Great Dane puppy eats will need to supply all of these and more. And how the ingredients are mixed is important as well.

### Do's and don'ts

Be sure to follow the feeding guidelines. One of the worst things you can do is allow your puppy to become overweight – it has serious health implications.

Don't feed your puppy from the table. People food often adds calories and unneeded fat to a Great Dane's diet, and it can make your puppy into a finicky eater.

When you change foods, gradually mix the new food in with the old over two weeks. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on your puppy.

Feed at the same times every day; 3 times a day for young Great Dane puppies, 2 times per day for older puppies, and 1 time per day for adults (this amount can be broken into 2 or more feedings per day.)



## Nutrition For Adult Great Danes

When a Great Dane reaches full maturity, it enters the maintenance period. The objective of feeding at this time is to maintain a healthy body condition while supplying needed nutrients and energy.

### Feeding basics

Normal healthy dogs who are not pregnant, nursing, or hardworking have relatively low nutritional requirements for maintaining an appropriate body condition. Unlike Great Dane puppies, who are developing into their adult bodies, adult Great Danes need to keep the bodies they have healthy and strong.

If your Great Dane doesn't have these conditions, you want to feed a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food in amounts that will keep your Great Dane in ideal body condition. A good body condition is one in which the animal is well proportioned, with an observable waist behind the ribcage, and ribs that can be felt with a slight fat covering over them.

### Tips for proper feeding

Choose a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food.

Providing a proper diet for an adult Great Dane can be straightforward and simple without the need for supplements of any kind.

If supplemental meat or table scraps are fed, they should account for no more than 10% of the total diet.

For Great Danes with lower caloric needs and/or for Great Danes that are less



active, attention should be paid to the potential for excessive weight gain.

Often a Great Dane's weight can be reduced simply by eliminating table scraps and treats from the diet and by avoiding high-energy dog foods.

Feeding recommendations for adult Great Danes can vary, depending upon the dogs activity, metabolism and owner's preference.

Whether or not an animal is fed once or twice each day, it should be fed at the same time, and fresh drinking water should always be made available.

A Great Dane's appetite may vary from day to day and should not be a concern unless the loss of appetite persists or your Great Dane shows signs of illness or weight loss. In these situations your Great Dane should be examined by a veterinarian.

### Switching foods

Dogs, including Great Danes, do not need variety in their diet. In fact, it is best to switch foods as little as possible to avoid creating a finicky eater. But when you do need to change foods (such as when your Great Dane turns 5 years old for and starts eating senior food), gradually mix the new food in with the old over 7 - 10 days. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on your dog.



## Nutrition For Hardworking Great Danes

Hardworking Great Danes need much more nutrition than a typical Great Dane. These dogs will need special diets and feeding schedules to support the exertions of their work and training.

### Is your Great Dane hardworking?

The first step in deciding your Great Dane's diet is to figure out if he truly is a "hardworking dog." If he spends most of the week indoors and then goes out for a vigorous run or long play session on the weekends, a normal diet will probably suffice, with maybe a little extra on exercise days to make up for the calories he'll burn off.

On the other hand, if your Great Dane spends several days a week out in the open running around. dietary adjustments may be in order.

## Feeding hardworking dogs

Usually, you will want a nutritionally dense food with 27 percent protein, 1,850 digestible calories per pound and a 12 percent fat recommendation.

Hardworking Great Danes often will need to be fed twice a day to keep up body condition. In addition, it is a good idea to keep handfuls of food with you when out in activity to give your dog a "pick-me-up" during the day.

Some people feed their Great Danes candy to maintain energy and blood sugar. This can be dangerous because of the canine problems associated with large amounts of chocolate. Talk to your veterinarian if you think you will need to give your dog a special boost. Your veterinarian can recommend products designed for this need.

Don't feed immediately before or after hard work. Make sure there is always plenty of water, but regulate it before and after exercise so your dog doesn't get sick. Keep the water cool, but not cold.

In cold weather, you may need to feed your Great Dane extra just to keep warm. The rule of thumb is 7.5 percent more calories than normal for every drop of 10 degrees from normal.

## In the off season

One of the challenges for feeding working or busy Great Danes is what to do in the off-season or Winter if you (and he are not so active). There are two schools of thought: feed your Great Dane less of the protein-dense food, which avoids a food transition but can leave your dog feeling hungry when the volume is reduced; or feed your Great Dane the same amount of a less-dense food, which keeps your Great Dane full but can result in finicky eating if he prefers one over the other. The best thing to do in either case is make the transition slowly over a 7 - 10 day period.



## Nutrition For Inactive Great Danes

Great Danes that don't get much exercise don't need as many calories as Great Danes that do. You should pay attention to your Great Dane's energy level, potential reasons your dog's energy level might change and things you can do to keep your less active Great Dane fit.

Inactive Great Danes are more likely to put on extra pounds since they don't burn as many calories. This puts them at risk for obesity, which carries with it a greater risk for a variety of health ailments.

### What Is an inactive Great Dane?

There is no precise definition for an inactive Great Dane, but you probably can tell if your dog fits this category. Inactive Great Danes don't get much exercise and often don't seem to have much interest in exercise - Great Danes that prefer to sleep, don't run when they go outside or tend to move as little as possible most likely fit this category.

### Why is a Great Dane inactive?

Great Danes might be inactive for a variety of reasons:

- **Age:** As Great Danes grow older, their energy level tends to drop.
- **Illness or Injury:** Physical ailments can make it harder to move as much. These might be temporary slowdowns, but adjustments should still be made.
- **Overweight:** Great Danes that are overweight may tend to be less active. This can create a dangerous spiral. The more overweight, the less active, and the less active, the more overweight.

### Feeding an inactive Great Dane

If you have an inactive Great Dane, you should try to feed the right amount of calories for your dog's activity level. If your Great Dane is in ideal body condition and isn't gaining weight, you're feeding the right amount. But if your dog has become less active while his feeding has remained the same and he's getting overweight, try these tips:

1. First, cut back on treats and snacks. These are generally high in calories and may contribute to weight gain.
2. The second step can be to feed less of the animal's regular pet food.

- Measure the amount of food that's put into the pet's dish to prevent the serving size from increasing over time.
3. Third, owners can increase a Great Dane's exercise with additional walks or playtime each day. This helps you the owner as well as your Great Dane, and has the additional benefit of increasing the amount of time you spend together.
  4. Finally, you could consider switching to a reduced-calorie food. These products are designed to allow you to serve a nice-size portion while still reducing the calories the animal eats.

It is always a good idea to consult with a veterinarian before changing a Great Dane's diet. The veterinarian can help tailor program for an individual pet and can track progress and help troubleshoot along the way.



## Nutrition For Senior Great Danes

When Great Danes move into their senior years – usually defined as 7 years of age or older – they can often benefit from a diet tailored to their particular lifestage. Here are some ways to tell what your Great Dane needs and how to provide it.

### Signs of a senior Great Dane

By the most common definition, Great Danes cross into their senior years when they enter the final 25% of their expected lifespan.

As a good rule of thumb, you should start looking for the Seven Signs of Senior at about seven years of age. Those signs include:

1. Graying muzzle or coat – or other coat conditions that weren't there before
2. Slowing down and staying down – less energy, trouble getting up or limping
3. Sleeping more – a common side effect of aging
4. Changing habits – including play preferences and eating or drinking habits
5. Change in weight – some dogs gain weight as they age while

others lose

6. Bad breath – a sign of dental and gum problems, sometimes exacerbated by age
7. Hearing or vision changes – like humans, senses can dull over time

If you see these signs, you should consult your veterinarian. There may be options to treat or reduce the symptoms. Also, these signs could also be related to another issue besides aging that your veterinarian might catch.

### Feeding a senior Great Dane

If you have a generally healthy Great Dane over seven years of age, your dog may benefit from a properly balanced senior dog food. Older Great Danes sometimes have different needs than adult Great Danes, and foods can be tailored to help meet those needs. Consult your veterinarian for more information.

One changing need that should be tracked is reduced activity level, a common sign of aging. Less active animals may have reduced energy requirements. Over-feeding may predispose animals to obesity, which is associated with various physical disorders. For these reasons, it is particularly important to feed older dogs according to their individual needs and to maintain a healthy body condition.

Also note that older Great Danes may have difficulty chewing as a result of dental issues. In this situation, you may want to moisten dry food to make it more palatable.



### Treats In A Balanced Diet

Treats are a popular tool to use in training, and many people like to give their Great Danes little tidbits of food as a way to show affection. But from a nutritional point of view, treats can be problematic. If the treats are too rich, your Great Dane can develop an upset stomach. Feed too many, and you could be on your way to an overweight dog.

Great Danes get all of the nutrition they need and all the calories they need from a complete and balanced dog food. Treats that are given in addition to a Great Dane's regular diet add calories, fat and extra nutrients that may not be good for your dog.

### The risks of excessive treats

The extra calories contained in dog treats and people food can be a leading issue in giving treats. These extra calories, if not burned off through extra play and exercise, can lead to weight gain and even obesity, which carries with it increased risk of a number of dangerous issues.

In addition to extra calories and fat, people food can also raise a host of additional problems. The wrong food in the wrong doses can result in unexpected consequences. To avoid these, the safest thing to do is never supplement your Great Dane's diet with people food.

### Responsible use of treats for Great Danes

A safe way to use food as treats is to measure out your Great Dane's daily allowance of kibble in the morning and dip into that for training treats. This way you can give your dog a food reward for a job well done while not worrying about causing any problems.

Of course, it is possible to use manufactured dog treats responsibly. Simply remember that if you feed your Great Dane treats, they should be low fat and you must reduce your dog's caloric intake accordingly to accommodate for the extra calories.

When training, you want to work away from giving a food reward every time. Sometimes you will want your dog to sit but you won't have any food. So start gradually replacing the treat with praise. Once your dog has learned a command, give the treat every other time, then every third time.

Make sure your praise is lavish every time, with or without a treat. Pretty soon, your puppy will work for praise - and the occasional snack.



## Supplements

Some people worry that their Great Danes aren't getting all the nutrition they need. They may supplement their Great Danes' diets with people food or with vitamin or mineral supplements similar to those many humans take. But if you're already feeding a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food for the appropriate lifestage, these supplements are unnecessary and could possibly be harmful.

When it comes to providing optimum nutrition for Great Danes, reputable pet food manufacturers have done the work for us. Research scientists have formulated commercial diets containing all the nutrients normal, healthy dogs need for a particular life stage. For Great Danes with certain health conditions, there are special dog foods that are designed to help address those issues. Your veterinarian can help you choose the right food.

### People food

Supplementing with human food adds calories to a pet's diet, may lead to an obese Great Dane and can unbalance a pet's diet. People food can lead to other issues depending on the food and the amounts in which it is fed.

### Vitamin and mineral supplements for Great Danes

Vitamin and mineral supplements are best left to the experts. For example, some Great Dane owners believe that additional calcium, and possibly other minerals, should be added to the diets of pregnant and nursing females and growing puppies.

It is true that more minerals are needed at these times, but they are normally obtained through increased consumption of a high quality nutritionally balanced diet. Adding them out of proportion to other nutrients can create skeletal deformities and other problems. Learn more about the interactions of minerals.

Always talk to your veterinarian if you think supplements may be needed. Your veterinarian can make that call, and if they are needed, will prescribe the right minerals in the right amounts.



## Weight Gain

As a symptom, weight gain can point to a few different issues, but the cause is always the same: Your Great Dane is consuming more calories than it is burning. The cause is usually very mundane - overfeeding by the owner - but the effects can be serious. Do not write weight gain off as a harmless issue.

### Determining weight gain

The truth is, 'weight gain' is not really the issue. Great Danes, like people, can and should gain weight at certain times - puppyhood is the obvious example. As a Great Dane puppy gets larger and fills out, you are going to see some weight gain.

The real problem to watch for is changes in body condition. It is very important that you learn how to evaluate your Great Dane's body condition and monitor it from puppyhood on.

### Risks of weight gain

When extra weight adds up over time, it can lead to obesity, which can result in certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. Learn more about problems associated with Obesity and ways to address them.

If you determine that your Great Dane is overfed, the cause is almost always overfeeding and/or lack of exercise. But there can be root causes, such as injury, illness, aging or changes in metabolism. These conditions might carry their own risks above and beyond weight gain.

### How to address weight gain in Great Danes

Since most weight gain comes from too much food or too little exercise, start with these easy steps:

Follow the guidelines on the Body Condition and Obesity pages, including eliminating table scraps, reducing treats, and reducing the amount you feed.

If you think you might want to try a reduced calorie food, consult your veterinarian about the best course to take.

If the weight gain is sudden or there is no clear cause, or if usual weight loss or maintenance practices don't seem to help (for example, if your Great Dane has trouble exercising more), go to your veterinarian. There may be other conditions that need treatment or analysis.





## Obesity

Obesity is the number one nutritional disorder among Great Danes. Studies suggest that approximately 25 percent of the Great Danes presented to veterinary clinics are overweight. This extra weight puts pets at risk for certain health problems. Know how to recognize obesity, what causes it, and how to correct – or better yet, prevent – it.

### Definition of obesity

Great Danes that have an accumulation of body fat that puts them 20% or more over ideal body weight are considered obese. These dogs often have fat deposits over the thorax, spine and the base of the tail, as well as the neck and limbs.

Obesity is a major concern because it disposes a Great Dane to certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. And as revealed in a study by Nestlé Purina, dogs fed to a lean body condition may live longer than dogs allowed to eat more freely.

### Recognizing obesity

Owners are so familiar with the appearance of their Great Danes that they often fail to recognize obesity unaided. Try these techniques, and if you think your dog may be obese or aren't sure, have your veterinarian take a look.

- **Rib check:** Place both of your thumbs on your dog's backbone and spread both hands across his rib cage. On an obese dog, you won't be able to feel the ribs through the fat covering, or will only be able to feel them when you exert significant pressure. Actually feeling your dog is important, as the coat of many dogs will make a visual check difficult.
- **Profile check:** Examine your dog's profile – it's best if you are level with the dog. In an obese dog, the stomach will hang down and there will be no abdominal tuck behind the rib cage.
- **Overhead check:** Looking at your dog from overhead, see if you can see a waist behind the ribs. An overweight dog will not have a discernible waist.

It's a good idea to learn more about how to rate your dog's body condition.

## Causes of obesity

The simple reason why Great Danes gain weight to the point that they become obese is because they are consuming more calories than they burn through exercise and metabolism, but the cause of this discrepancy can have different sources.

## Diet and exercise

For Great Danes who are simply eating more calories than they burn, there are two ways to impact the animal's weight: feed fewer calories, or increase the amount of exercise the pet gets, thus burning more calories.

## Genetic predisposition

Certain breeds seem to be more susceptible to obesity than others including beagles, basset hounds, dachshunds and Labrador retrievers. You must watch the weight of dogs of these breeds more closely. However, Great Danes can also be prone to put on weight if you are not careful.

## Hormonal disorders

Conditions which impact hormone balances in dogs may contribute to the development of obesity. These include thyroid or pituitary gland dysfunction. Neutering and spaying may also cause changes in metabolism. You must watch the weight of Great Danes with these conditions more closely.

## How to correct obesity in Great Danes

If you know or suspect your Great Dane is obese, see your veterinarian before making any significant changes. Your veterinarian will recommend a regimen that includes some or all of the tips below, and will tell you how much your dog can handle and how quickly:

- Eliminate table scraps and treats
- Reduce the amount of food you give your dog
- Increase the amount of exercise your dog gets
- Consider switching to a low-calorie pet food

## Preventing obesity in Great Danes

As always, the best thing you can do for your Great Dane is not let him get obese in the first place. Here are some small steps you can take to control your Great

Dane's food intake and calorie expenditure:

- Don't feed table scraps; they are typically high in calories.
- Limit treats. Remember that if you feed your dog treats, they should be low-fat and you must reduce your dog's caloric intake accordingly to accommodate the extra calories.
- Make sure your dog gets exercise regularly, and try to make time for extra.
- Measure servings – don't just eyeball the amount you serve. And don't use an oversized bowl, which makes it easier to overfeed.
- Try feeding two or more smaller meals a day instead of one big meal so your dog feels more satisfied.
- Utilize the feeding guides provided on pet food packages. Remember, these guidelines are averages and you may need to adjust your feedings based on your dog's individual body condition.



## Finicky Eating

Sometimes it can be hard to get your Great Dane to eat his complete and balanced dog food. This can be a problem, especially if it means your dog is not getting enough nutrition or is getting the wrong nutrition from somewhere else.

### What Is finicky eating?

As a rule, finicky eating is when your Great Dane will only eat certain things. It is sometimes manifested in a dog who refuses to eat the complete and balanced dog food you offer or doesn't eat enough. Finicky eaters usually do so out of preference, but you should keep in mind that Great Danes might also refuse to eat because of a medical condition.

Also keep in mind environmental factors. Many Great Dane owners comment that their dogs eat less during hot weather. This is not unusual. Studies show that, as a general rule, dogs need about 7.5 percent fewer calories with each 10 degree rise in temperature.

### Change in diet

One possible cause of finicky eating is a sudden change in diet. Some tips on making diet changes more tolerable:

- Before leaving the breeder, pet store, or Humane Society, find out what type, flavor, and brand of food your Great Dane has been eating. Acquire some of this food.
- If the food your Great Dane has been eating is acceptable to you, continue feeding it.
- If you want to switch your Great Dane to a new food at any time, begin with a day or two of feeding the same food he had before.
- Then mix that food with your chosen brand or flavor for a few days, slowly decreasing the amount of old food and increasing the amount of new. This should take about a week or a little more.
- Do this any time you change foods or your dog may develop gastrointestinal upset.

### Making food more palatable

If your Great Dane doesn't like the new food, hang in there and try to make it more appealing.

- If you've chosen dry food, add a little water to moisten it.
- If you serve a moist food, warm it a little.
- Allow your Great Dane time to adjust.

If he still won't eat it, you may want to try a new food. This causes finicky behavior.

If he won't eat that, have a talk with your veterinarian. You may be experiencing a complete refusal to eat.

Mix a little wet with the dry to entice. Slowly decrease wet until he's back to only dry.

### Scheduling and controlling diet

An indulgent family member rather than your Great Dane may be the problem. By feeding human treats and food from the table, your Great Dane's hunger is satisfied with all this people food and it either refuses to eat or nibbles only a few bites of the food it should be eating.

Don't feed your Great Dane people food and if you feed treats, do so sparingly and reduce the amount of complete and balanced dog food you offer to accommodate the extra calories.

Make sure your Great Dane isn't eating somewhere else. The garbage can is a common temptation for dogs. Keep garbage out of reach; not only might it reduce your dog's appetite for dog food, it can cause a host of other problems, including diarrhea.

Scheduling specific feeding times throughout the day is beneficial. Your Great Dane will know when food is coming at will learn to eat at that time.

If none of these tips help, ask your veterinarian to examine your dog for other conditions that may be leading to these eating habits, especially if your dog seems to be unexpectedly losing weight.



## Refusal To Eat

Complete refusal to eat can be a sign of a serious problem that will require a veterinarian's attention. But don't rule out that your Great Dane may just be finicky.

## Distinguishing between finicky eating and refusal to eat

Refusal to eat is when your Great Dane completely stops eating the food put before it or eats small amounts only reluctantly.

Finicky eating is often a result of the food options made available to a dog. Your Great Dane still wants to eat, but it only wants to eat certain things. This can occur when his diet is changed unexpectedly, or when he gets used to certain foods. One example might be a Great Dane that regularly eats scraps from the table; this dog might eventually refuse dog food because it wants people food.

Finicky eating is a learned behavior and there are certain things you can do to try and address it.

## If your Great Dane refuses to eat

If your Great Dane simply won't or can't eat, no matter what you try, you must see your veterinarian. This is especially true if your dog starts losing weight. The problem could be anything from sore teeth to serious internal problems, and your veterinarian can diagnose and recommend solutions to the problem.



## Sudden Weight Loss

Sudden or unexplained weight loss should be reported to your veterinarian immediately. It can be a sign of a number of issues, some relatively easy to correct, and some quite serious. Don't risk overlooking a potentially serious problem.

## Cause of weight loss in a Great Dane

In very broad terms, weight loss occurs when your Great Dane is burning more calories than he is consuming. But why this is happening can vary.

- There might be some internal problem that means your dog isn't utilizing the calories he is eating.
- There may be an internal disorder that redirects calories from vital life functions.
- Your dog may not be eating as much, sometimes due to teeth problems that make eating painful.
- Your dog may suddenly be burning more calories. Cold weather makes

a dog's body burn calories for warmth, and dogs that are working hard use more calories too.

### What to do

Unless the cause is extremely obvious (such as you've started running a great deal with your Great Dane, but haven't been offering more food), you should consult with your veterinarian. Sudden and unexplained weight loss isn't normal, and you should find the cause before the weight loss causes further problems for your Great Dane.



## Water

Water is the one necessary nutrient not adequately available in a complete and balanced dog food – and it is also one a Great Dane cannot be healthy without. Owners should have a clean bowl filled with fresh water available to their dogs at all times.

### Functions of water

All animals depend on water for life processes. Water is the most important nutrient for survival on a short-term basis, and it is one that is too frequently neglected. Among its functions:

- Water is found inside and outside cells, and is involved in most biochemical reactions within the body.
- Water is essential in helping regulate body temperature.
- Water lubricates body tissues.
- Water is a fluid medium for the blood and lymph systems.

The amount of water a Great Dane will need depends on the amount of activity he is involved in, the temperature and humidity of the environment, and other factors such as pregnancy and lactation.

### Sources of water for Great Danes

Obviously, most of the water your Great Dane needs is consumed by drinking it. Some water may also be present in your Great Dane's food if you feed a canned or semi-moist (chewy) food; however, you should never rely on the water present

in food to meet your pet's needs

### Providing water

As noted above, plenty of fresh, cool water should be made available at all times. While you might not need to bring water along when you walk around the block, you may want to bring a bottle and a dish to the dog park or when out exercising, especially in warm weather.





# Great Dane Grooming Basics

Proper dog grooming is an important part of Great Dane care. It not only makes your dog look better, but contributes to his or her physiological and psychological health. Ensuring you have the proper dog grooming supplies will make your dog healthier and your job easier

Great Danes are basically low-maintenance dogs that tend to keep themselves clean.

You need only to bathe and/or use a “slicker” brush to tidy up his short, hard coat with a soft brush as the coat does shed. To make a Great Dane coat gleams after a bath, rub coat down with chamois cloth. It works and their coat stays so shiny!

Their nails require regular trimming or could also get naturally worn down by hard surface.

Have your veterinarian remove tartar from your Great Dane’s teeth periodically, especially as it grows older. You can also learn to do this yourself.

Here are some more detailed grooming tips for you and your Great Dane:

## Coat

Brush your Great Dane thoroughly on a regular basis (at least once a week). This is the most basic of dog grooming steps. It helps keep his or her hair in good condition by removing dirt, spreading the natural oils throughout the coat, preventing tangles from forming and keeping the skin clean and free from irritation.

It is best to start brushing your Dane at an early age, but do not despair if he or she is an older animal. It is possible to train one to enjoy dog grooming. Proceed slowly, and be sure to use treats and plenty of praise to make the experience fun!

## Nails

Trim your Great Dane's nails about once per month. You'll need a clipper designed specifically for the kind of companion animal you have. Either a scissor- or guillotine-style clipper can be used. You should also purchase a small bottle of blood-clotting powder.

## How to Cut Your Great Dane's Nails

1. Have your dog sit beside you. Then place one of his or her paws in your hand and gently pull it forward. If your pet dislikes dog grooming, slowly accustom him or her to it by offering treats and praise.
2. Gradually shorten one nail. Be sure to stop before you reach the quick, which is the part of the nail that contains nerves and blood vessels. If you cannot see the quick clearly, stop cutting just behind the point at which the nail begins to curve downward.
3. If you cut into the quick, do not panic. Put some clotting powder on a moist cotton swab and press it firmly against the nail for several seconds.
4. Repeat the process until all of your dog's nails have been trimmed.
5. Do not forget to trim the dewclaw, which is located on the inside of each front leg just above the paw. (Some dogs do not have dewclaws.)

It is also a good idea to consult the vet about proper cutting procedure before you attempt it yourself. And if you find that you simply can not perform the task, you can always take your Dane to the vet or a groomers and have them perform the task for you.

## Ears

Ear care is an important part of dog grooming. Ear infections can not only be painful, but lead to permanent hearing loss. The signs of a problem with a dog's ears include redness, constant scratching, head shaking and odor.

### How to Clean Your Great Dane's Ears

1. Check your dog's ears twice per month as part of your dog grooming routine. The skin inside and on the flaps should be pale pink. If there is a foul odor and/or any red, brown or black skin, have a veterinarian examine your pet's ears.
2. Moisten a cotton ball with warm water or a little mineral oil and use it to clean the opening into the canal and the flaps. Do not probe too deeply into the canal.

## Teeth

Great Danes can get cavities and develop periodontal disease, so their teeth should be cleaned as part of their dog grooming routine.

Here your Great Dane can do his own dog grooming! Give your dog chews on once or twice a week will go a long way to keeping his teeth clean and healthy.

Otherwise you should clean your dog's teeth with pet toothpaste regularly. It is best to use a small toothbrush that has soft bristles. Cleanings performed by a veterinarian may also be required.

## Bathing

You really don't need to bathe your Great Dane regularly, and you should really only resort to a bath if he or she smells foul. However, when it comes time to bath your Dane, be sure to brush him or her before each bath in order to get all of the mats out of his or her coat.

### How to Bathe Your Great Dane

1. Place a rubber mat in your bathtub, for secure footing. You may wish to place a cotton ball in each of your companion animal's ears to prevent water from entering (*don't* forget to take them out!), or you can simply hold your hand over the dog's ear when washing that area.
2. Rinse your pet with warm water. Use a spray hose if one is available, but be sure to keep the nozzle very close to your companion animal's body. Never spray him or her in the face.
3. Apply a shampoo designed especially for pets in small amounts, working from the head to the tail. Be sure to clean the rectum, between the toes, behind the ears and under the chin. Try to avoid getting shampoo in your companion animal's eyes.
4. Thoroughly rinse your pet with warm water.
5. Dry your dog with a towel and/or animal hair dryer.



# Choose The Right Vet For Your Great Dane

Choosing the right veterinarian for your Great Dane is an important decision, because you will want to find someone whom you can trust to diagnose your animal companion should they ever become ill, as well as provide you with the best advice to assist you with treatment options.

After yourself, the most important person in your dog's life is a veterinarian. Take your puppy or dog in for a visit as soon as possible after coming home for the first time. Your veterinarian can check for problems you might miss. And if there is a problem, the sooner treatment starts, the better.

When it comes to selecting your vet, you won't want to base your decision on:

- How friendly he or she may be
- How inexpensive he or she is

All that should concern you is how logically the vet thinks, and how well they respond to your dog's condition, so they can help you, help your dog.

There are two different types of veterinarian care that you can choose for your Great Dane:

1. **Allopathic Veterinarian:** This is a type of veterinarian whose philosophies are based on treating your dog's symptoms with either some form of drug, medication or chemical. Some people believe that this style of treatment, only adds more stress on your animal companion's immune system, and may lead to other complications or even negative reactions if the chemical wreaks havoc on the dog's other bodily organs.
2. **Holistic Veterinarian:** This type of veterinarian believes in using natural elements of healing such as herbs used for medicine, vitamins, minerals, acupuncture, antioxidants, enzymes and homeopathy as ways to treat illnesses in animals if they should ever occur. The idea behind this approach is to prevent illness from occurring, by keeping your dog's immune system strong and healthy

Some believe that the holistic approach is the safer and logical choice, but in the end the approach you pick will depend entirely on your beliefs, and what you think will work best for your companion. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and find out detailed information about both veterinarian options before making your final decision.

When you look for a veterinarian, consider the following:

- Recommendation of family and friends – often the best indicator of a good veterinarian
- Cleanliness and orderliness of office – a sign of professionalism and good for your Great Dane's health
- Proximity to your home – you want to be able to visit easily if you have questions
- Office hours that fit your schedule – convenience matters; otherwise you might not go
- Rapport between yourself and the veterinarian – you want to be able to communicate openly about concerns

Also identify the nearest animal hospital. You never know when there might be an emergency.

By building a relationship with a veterinarian, you will know that your Great Dane is getting care from someone you trust. And by going to the same veterinarian over time, you will be building a medical history for your pet. Building this relationship will have a positive long-term impact on the quality of care your Great Dane receives throughout life.



## You Great Danes First Visit To The Vet

When should you first take your new Great Dane to the veterinarian? The short answer is, as soon as possible. And it must not end at one visit. Your puppy will need more veterinary care in the first year of life than at any other time. Not only are there concerns of immediate importance, there is a lot your veterinarian can do and recommend that will help keep your puppy healthy even when he is all grown up

### First visit

Ideally, select a veterinarian even before bringing your Great Dane puppy home. Once your puppy is home, the first meeting of veterinarian and puppy should happen as soon as possible - ideally within 24 hours. In addition to a general check up and examination for parasites, you and the veterinarian should work out a specific schedule of visits and vaccinations at that first meeting.

### First three months

In the first three months of your puppy's life, your veterinarian will probably want to meet every three or four weeks for vaccinations. How long this schedule continues varies by location, but going until 16 weeks of age is not unusual.

### Three to six months

Rabies vaccinations sometimes are regulated by local laws and often begin between three and six months. Between four and six months, your puppy should be checked again for parasites and your veterinarian may recommend heartworm treatment. Also watch for your puppy's permanent teeth to come in.

Spaying or neutering is recommended between four and six months. The procedure is simple, and males usually feel pretty good in a day. Females may take two or three days. This is an important decision. With the number of unplanned dogs born every year, having your puppy sterilized is the responsible thing to do.

### Six months to a year

After six months, the veterinarian visits usually taper off. There are boosters at about one year, and these will be repeated on a regular basis, following your veterinarian's recommendation. In general, it is a good idea for adult Great Danes to make at least one visit a year to maintain the healthy start they got as puppies.

Perhaps the most loving, responsible thing you can do for your Great Dane is to see that he receives timely health care from a qualified veterinarian. His life depends on it.



## Vaccinating Your Great Dane

Just like humans, puppies receive vaccines to protect them against disease according and viruses to the schedule provided by your veterinarian. Although only your veterinarian can tell you how many visits are needed and when, expect several in the first year of your dog's life and annual boosters after that.

If you have adopted an adult Great Dane and don't know if its shots are current, see your veterinarian about the best course of action.

A vaccine works by introducing your Great Dane's immune system to a small strain of a particular virus, without actually giving the animal the disease. This allows your dog the chance to become familiar with the virus, allowing them the chance to fight it off. Therefore, the next time your Great Dane is introduced to the same virus, his immune system will be able to quickly fight off the foreign bacteria with ease.

Your veterinarian may provide routine vaccinations for canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus, coronavirus, parainfluenza, Bordetella, Lyme disease and rabies. Remember, most vaccines must be given over a period of time and require multiple veterinary visits. So check with your veterinarian and get ready for a happy, rewarding friendship with your Great Dane.

### Canine Distemper

A highly contagious viral disease that affects a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems. It can be spread through the air or by contact with an infected animal, its feces or urine and can be fatal. Because a puppy's natural immunity may wear off before he is vaccinated, reduce risk of exposure by limiting contact with unfamiliar dogs until the vaccination series is completed.

Symptoms include coughing, sneezing, nose and eye discharge, fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea and seizures.

### Infectious Canine Hepatitis

This viral disease, also know as adenovirus, is spread by contact with infected animals, their feces, urine or saliva. It affects the liver, kidneys and cells lining the blood vessels.

Symptoms include high fever, thirst, inflammation of nose or mouth, diarrhea, abdominal pain and tenderness, liver damage, loss of appetite, hemorrhage and depression.

## Leptospirosis

An extremely contagious bacterial disease that spreads through contact with nasal secretions, urine or saliva of infected animals. Early signs are not apparent, so infection can go undetected. Recovered animals can continue spreading the disease, which can also affect humans.

**Leptospirosis may produce inflamed kidneys, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of** appetite and listlessness. Liver damage can also occur. Note that early signs of the disease may not be readily apparent.

## Parvovirus

This viral infection is a common, deadly viral infection and usually strikes puppies. It is spread by contact with and infected dog's blood, feces or vomit

Symptoms include severe diarrhea, fever, vomiting, loss of appetite and dehydration.

## Parinfluenza

A highly infectious virus that can be one of the causes of "kennel cough." It spreads quickly among dogs kept in close quarters and can seriously damage the respiratory system or even result in death.

Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough, loss of appetite, depression and runny nose and eyes.

## Rabies

This is an infection of the central nervous system that results in paralysis and death. Rabies is always fatal. It is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Rabies is a serious public health threat, so it is essential to vaccinate your dog. Most states have laws requiring vaccination.

A stage of high excitability includes unprovoked biting and sensitivity to noise. There is also a stage of paralysis, cramps and swallowing difficulties.

## Coronavirus

A highly contagious viral infection of the gastrointestinal tract. Again, this disease is spread through contact with infected blood, feces or vomit.

Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, high fever and dehydration.



## Bordetella

This is an airborne bacterial infection involved in "kennel cough." Dogs may catch this when exposed to other dogs in kennels, dog shows and field trials.

Symptoms include persistent coughing, sneezing and retching accompanied by nasal discharge. It also increases your dog's susceptibility to other upper respiratory infections.

## Lyme Disease

This is a tick-borne disease that affects both dogs and humans.

It can exhibit itself as arthritis with the sudden onset of severe pain and lameness, fever, lethargy, loss of appetite and depression.

Newborn Great Dane puppies receive disease-fighting antibodies from their mother's milk. These antibodies normally last only six to sixteen weeks, however. After that, your puppy needs vaccinations to help protect him from disease.

Some Great Danes may have a reaction to a vaccine, but these reactions are rarely dangerous. If your Great Dane experiences loss of appetite or excessively sleeps for *more* than 48 hours after a vaccination, you should consult your vet.

If your Great Dane has symptoms of swelling, vomiting or hives, their reaction is stronger, but none life-threatening. Simply have them examined by the vet, and inform the vet of possible allergic reactions before the next vaccination, so he or she can take precautions to lessen the stress on your dog.

Even if your Great Dane has a reaction, you should still have him or her regularly vaccinated, as small reactions pale in comparison to contracting a fatal virus.

Great Danes should begin receiving vaccinations when they are puppies, and are over 3 months of age. Your vet will inform you of the vaccinations most needed for your dog, so don't be afraid to ask questions, and learn all about the various diseases that threaten the life of your furry loved one, so you can keep them well protected.



## Pet Health Insurance

One of the best ways to protect yourself financially if your Great Dane suffers from any future illnesses that require expensive treatments is to obtain pet health insurance.

If you are interested in obtaining pet health insurance for your Great Dane, you will find that there are many excellent insurance companies such as Pet Assure, Veterinary Pet Insurance and Premier Pet Insurance that can provide coverage for your dog if he or she should ever become seriously ill.

Of course there are different pet health insurance plans for you to consider, so you can choose the one that you feel most comfortable with and can afford.

However, you should keep in mind, that just like most insurance policies, pet health insurance will not cover any pre-existing conditions in your Great Dane. That being the case, if pet health insurance is something you want for you dog, you should sign up for it as soon as possible, so both you and your pal can truly benefit from it.



# How To Keep Your Great Dane Healthy

Your Great Dane will rely on you to keep him in good health. A proper diet, regular exercise and grooming, and routine check-ups at the veterinarian will help keep your dog in top form.

It's also important for you to get to know your Great Dane's habits - eating, drinking, sleeping, and so forth - since sometimes a variation in those habits can be an indication that he isn't feeling well.

A good pet care plan can help with the cost of providing quality healthcare throughout your dog's life. As vet bills for dog health care in later years can be very expensive.

If your Great Dane does become ill then it is important to give him the best medication.

## Skin

Healthy skin is flexible and smooth, without scabs, growths, white flakes, or red areas. It ranges in color from pale pink to brown or black depending on the breed. Spotted skin is normal, whether your dog has a spotted or solid coat.

Check your Great Dane for fleas, ticks, lice, or other external parasites. To do this, blow gently on your dog's stomach or brush hair backward in a few places to see if any small specks scurry away or if ticks are clinging to the skin. Black "dirt" on your dog's skin or bedding may be a sign of flea droppings.

## Coat

A healthy short coat is glossy and pliable, without dandruff, bald spots, or excessive oiliness.

## Eyes

Bright and shiny eyes are an excellent sign of good dog health. Mucus and watery tears are normal but should be minimal and clear. The pink lining of the eyelids should not be inflamed, swollen, or have a yellow discharge.

The whites of your Great Dane's eyes should not be yellowish. Eyelashes should not rub the eyeball.

## Ears

The skin inside your dog's ears should be light pink and clean. There should be some yellow or brownish wax, but a large amount of wax or crust is abnormal. Poor dog health is shown by redness or swelling inside the ear. Your Great Dane shouldn't scratch his ears or shake his head frequently.

## Nose

Most people assume that a shiny wet nose is a sign. A dog's nose is usually cool and moist. It can be black, pink, or self-colored (the same color as the coat), depending on the breed. Nasal discharge should be clear, never yellowish, thick, bubbly, or foul smelling. A cool, wet nose does not necessarily mean good Great Dane health, and a dry, warm nose doesn't necessarily mean he's sick.

## Mouth, Teeth and Gums

Healthy gums are important for Great Dane health. They should be firm and pink, black, or spotted, just like your dog's skin. Young dogs have smooth white teeth that tend to darken with age. Puppies have 23 baby teeth and adults have around 42 permanent teeth, depending on the breed. As adult teeth come in, they push baby teeth out of the mouth.

To check your Dane's mouth, talk to him gently, then put your hand over the muzzle and lift up the sides of his mouth. Check that adult teeth are coming in as they should, and not being crowded by baby teeth. Make sure the gums are healthy and the breath is not foul-smelling. Look for soft white matter or hard white, yellow, or brown matter. This is plaque or tartar and should be brushed away to keep your dog in good health.

Mouth infections can lead to serious problems in the gums and lead to poor dog health in other parts of the body, including the heart, so it's important to give your dog's teeth and mouth special attention.

## Temperature

A Great Dane's normal temperature is 101 to 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 to 39.2 degrees Celsius). Taking a dog's temperature will tell you a lot about your dog's health.

To take your dog's temperature, you'll need a rectal thermometer. Put some petroleum jelly on the bulb of the thermometer. Ask someone to hold your dog's head while you lift his tail and insert the thermometer about an inch or so into the rectum. Do not let go of the thermometer. Hold it in until the temperature is read (about 3 minutes for a mercury thermometer), and then remove gently.

## Heartbeat and Pulse

The heart beat of a Great Dane in good health will be from 60 to 130 times a minute depending on whether they are resting or playing. Puppies have faster speeds, up to 220 beats per minute.

To check your Dane's heartbeat, place your fingers over the left side of the chest, where you can feel the strongest beat.

To check the pulse – which is the same speed as the heartbeat – press gently on the inside of the top of the hind leg. There is an artery there and the skin is thin, so it's easy to feel the pulse.

## Wee & Poo!

Urine is a great indicator of a good health, and should be clear yellow. Most adult Dane's have one or two bowel movements a day. Stools should be brown and firm. You can also check for worms. Runny, watery, or bloody stools, straining, or too much or too little urination warrant a call to the vet.

## Weight

A healthy Dane's weight is the result of the balance between diet and exercise. If he is getting enough nutritious food and exercise but still seems over- or underweight, he may have a health problem.

Don't let your Great Dane get fat by giving him too many between-meal snacks; obese dogs often develop serious health problems. The best way to tell if your dog is overweight is to feel his rib-cage area. You should be able to feel the ribs below the surface of the skin without much padding.

If you let your dog get over weight, or feed him the wrong things, then you can guarantee he will certainly suffer from poor dog health at some point in his life.



## 10 tips For A Healthy Great Dane

1. Feed him a balanced diet.
2. Give an occasional yogurt treat
3. Ask your vet about giving Great Dane calcium tablets as they could have some problems later on in life!
4. Keep him comfortable so his immune system can remain strong.
5. Give Great Danes lots of exercise and regularly.  
Remember that he is a big and strong breed and requires physical outlets for his boundless energy and high play/prey drive.
6. Walk them three times a day or have play sessions. Provide plenty of space for them to bounce around. You want to keep their spirit up and not break it or they won't be your dogs you fall in love with in the first place.  
Healthy and happy Danes are a joy to live with.
7. Make a breeder your friend.  
Keep in touch with the breeder who sold you the Great Dane. The breeder can advise you about care and health matters that are unique to the breed. Any Great Dane breeder, for that matter, can be an invaluable ally to you throughout your Dane's life.
8. Guard your Great Dane from fleas.  
Your Great Dane has fleas if you find black specks in the fur or fleabite marks on the skin. A tip given by an owner is to give your Great Dane garlic daily to prevent fleas.
9. Danes catch fleas from other animals. It is an every day problem that, at some time or another, you can expect to encounter in your Great Dane.  
The fleas only go to the Great Dane to feed on its blood. Fleas mostly live and multiply in your home. The comfortable living - central heating, double-glazing and, best of all, the fitted carpet - we create for ourselves and our Danes also work best for the fleas.
10. De-worm your puppy every month, and your adult Dane, every six months.

## Taking Care of Your Sick Dane

Great Dane illnesses can happen at any time. Believe it or not, some dogs are more susceptible to certain dog illnesses than others.

### Symptoms of dog illnesses

Symptoms of dog diseases can vary from poor coat condition to bleeding. You may be able to treat minor complaints yourself but should your dog exhibit any of the symptoms then you must take him to a vet immediately.

- Bleeding from the nose, mouth, rectum, genitalia
- Not eating or eating much less than normal for more than 1 day
- Drinking excessively
- Lethargy.
- Pain when you touch or move the animal
- Inability to urinate or defecate or showing signs of stress when attempting these activities

A veterinarian should always be contacted whenever your dog is not acting normally or its health is in question.

When you go to visit your veterinarian, you might want to ask him or her about the common dog illnesses for your particular breed of dog. You need to be prepared for what's ahead and you want to provide your dog with as much immunity to these diseases as possible.

The best way to ensure you can provide for your dog when he is ill is to take out pet insurance. Vet bills can be very costly and no one wants to be in a position where they can't afford to look after dog when he really needs care.

Your vet will likely give your dog the necessary shots to keep it healthy for many of these potential illnesses, but you have a right and a need as a responsible pet owner to know what may lie ahead.

In addition, knowing what dog illnesses are common in particular breeds can help you and your vet determine what a particular illness might be. If you know what the symptoms are for the illnesses that are most common in your breed of dog, you can better diagnose your pet and catch the illness before it becomes severe. Knowing the common dog diseases will help you keep your dog healthy.

Here are some common Great Dane illnesses. Some of these illnesses are found mainly when your dog reaches an older age; others of these illnesses can occur at any point throughout your Dane's life.

Great Danes, unfortunately, are prone to several potential health problems like:

- skin allergy
- food allergy
- cancer
- hip dysplasia
- elbow dysplasia
- bloat
- wet tail
- fleas
- worms

Knowing what they are will help you to better monitor your pet's health and to gather the pertinent information, in case of an illness, that would assist your veterinarian to administer the correct diagnosis and treatment. Below are some common afflictions of Great Danes.



## Your Great Dane And The Weather

No matter where you live, the weather can pose a danger to your Great Dane at one time or another. Know what the risks are and how to avert them.

### Hot weather

Heat and humidity – and conditions that come with them – can pose a risk to dogs.

Make sure your Great Dane has shade when outside.

Supply plenty of cool water in a clean bowl.

Make your Great Dane rest between periods of exercise.

Avoid excessive exercise your Great Dane during hot days or warm, humid nights. The best time to exercise dogs is either early in the morning before sunrise or late in the evening after the sun goes down.

Watch for muscle weakness, heavy panting, dry skin, rapid heartbeat and/or collapse. It can mean heatstroke. Get to shade, give small amounts of water, immerse your dog in cool water if possible and get to your veterinarian.

In some areas, summer means mosquitoes and the risk of heartworm. See your



veterinarian for preventative treatment.

The problem of fleas and ticks intensifies during summer months.

Hot pavement, sticky tar or gravel may cause footpad problems. To remove tar from footpads, rub them with petroleum jelly and then gently wash with mild soap and water and rinse thoroughly.

**Never leave your Great Dane confined in a car or any other poorly ventilated enclosure; it can be fatal to your dog.**

### Cold weather

Remove salt, ice and packed snow from your Great Dane's paws.

Make sure your Great Dane isn't left "out in the cold." Provide warm shelter or let him inside on cold nights. Your pet's shelter should be insulated, elevated, protected from prevailing winds and watertight.

Feed your Great Dane extra food if he spends time outside. It takes energy to keep warm.

If you have an indoor Great Dane, winter may mean less exercise outside, which could mean weight gain. Watch your dog's body condition and adjust feeding amounts as needed.

If your Great Dane is outside, let him run around. It keeps the blood flowing.

You may find your indoor Great Dane experiencing dry skin and shedding. This is usually the result of low humidity. Frequent brushing helps remove dead hairs, skin and stimulates oil glands.

Dampness is a winter danger. Dry your pet if he gets wet and do all you can to keep him dry.

Keep fireplaces screened and train pets to keep a safe distance; cinders and fumes can cause problems

If your Great Dane suffers from frostbite, do not rub the skin. Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws and ear tips so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

### Storms

Whether it's a winter or summer storm, your pet should not be left outside.

Dangers include:

Flying debris that can strike and injure your pet.

Excessive cold and wet that leave your dog miserable and weakened.

Lightning can pose the same risks to dogs that it can to humans.

Winter winds and snow can lead to frostbite, chapping and hypothermia.

Great Danes have natural coats, but they aren't invincible. If you wouldn't want to stay out in the weather, your dog shouldn't either.



## Great Danes And Holidays

Holidays are a lot of fun for people and they can be for Great Danes, too. But they can also carry some risks. When you and yours get together, include your companion in the holidays in a way that is sensible, and provide supervision and forethought.

### Food

Many gatherings involve wonderful meals. Your family and guests may be tempted to slip your dog a little food as a holiday treat. Avoid this and ask people not to give handouts. They could upset your Great Dane's stomach; poultry may include bones; and if your dog becomes accustomed to treats, you may end up with a dog that begs at the table year-round.

### Decorations

Some Great Danes are notorious for chewing. Yarn, tinsel, ribbons and other "chewables" are attractive to a playful dog and may cause internal damage if swallowed. If you cannot supervise your Great Dane puppy or dog, keep him confined in a safe area.

### Candy

Great Danes, like people, may be tempted by holiday goodies. Allowing them to have holiday treats and sweets can lead to digestive upsets. In the case of chocolate goodies, beware. Chocolate contains theobromine, which is toxic to dogs.

## Excitement

Please remember that the holidays can be stressful for Great Danes. More people, more noise and changes in their daily schedule may frighten or confuse them. Securing your pet in a quiet area during a holiday party can be easier for your Great Dane and for you.

Holidays like Halloween include the extra excitement of lots of visitors, strange sights and sounds, and candy everywhere. If your Great Dane is timid by nature, new people are frightening enough without all those noisemakers and funny costumes. If your Great Dane is protective of you, all those people ringing your doorbell is certain to stress him as he's trying so hard to protect you and can't understand why you keep telling him it's okay. If your Great Dane is friendly or curious, he could easily make a quick exit through that constantly opening door. Keep your dog on a leash or in a crate if you have concerns.

## New Great Danes as gifts

Although a new Great Dane puppy or dog on a holiday would be a wonderful surprise, it can be stressful for the dog, causing him to become over-excited and confused. This confusion may create problems in getting your new Great Dane off to a good start. You may not have adequate time to begin housetraining your dog immediately and help him adjust to his new surroundings. Both time and patience are needed to establish a routine for a new Great Dane.

If possible, pick up your new Great Dane no later than the weekend before the holiday. This will allow time to become accustomed to his new home and family before the hustle and bustle of the holiday. If this is not possible, or if the days prior to the holiday promise to be hectic, try to arrange to pick up your new Great Dane after the holidays when household activities are calmer.



## Great Dane Travel

If you are planning to travel with your Great Dane, you should start by asking yourself if it makes sense to bring your canine companion. Many dogs love to travel, and many more can tolerate it, but flying your Great Dane across the country just to have him stay in his crate once you get there isn't fair to either of you.

### Before you travel

If you decide it does make sense to bring your dog along, there are preliminary preparations to make.

- Contact your destination and make sure your dog is welcome where you are staying.
- Go to your veterinarian and make sure all your dog's vaccinations are up to date.
- Ask your veterinarian to make sure your dog is in good enough health to travel.
- See if there are any particular health concerns (i.e. insects, cold, heat) at your destination. Take necessary precautions.

### Packing for your trip

- Take health and rabies certificates, which are needed when crossing some borders.
- Bring a recent color photo of your dog to help identify him if lost.
- Pack bowls, leash, toys, crate, medicines and grooming equipment.
- You may want to take food if traveling by car or if you aren't sure where to get food at your destination. Sudden diet changes can lead to digestive upsets and spoil the trip for you and your Great Dane.
- Make sure your Great Dane is wearing ID tags, and preferably carrying contact info for you at your destination.

## Traveling by car

- It's best to have a crate or car carrier in the back. Don't put it in direct sunlight.
- If your Great Dane is out of the crate, make sure he's buckled up. Special harnesses that connect to the seat belt are available. Don't use a leash – in a sudden stop, this could cause serious injury.
- Don't put your Great Dane in the back of a truck.
- Do not feed your Great Dane for at least three hours before leaving on a trip.
- During stops, provide fresh drinking water for your Great Dane. You may also reward him with a dog snack for being a good traveler.
- Feed your Great Dane shortly after you arrive at your destination or when you have stopped for the day.
- Always put your Great Dane on a leash before letting him out of the car.
- **Never leave your Great Dane in a closed car on a hot day. The heat and insufficient air circulation can quickly lead to heat stress and even death.**

## Traveling by air

- Try to avoid peak travel periods when delays and stopovers are longer, especially in very hot or very cold weather.
- Plan a trip with as few stops and transfers as possible.
- Make hotel, resort and airline reservations for your Great Dane well in advance.
- Some airlines allow cats and small dogs to travel (generally for an additional charge) with their owner if the carrier fits under the passenger seat. Not likely with a Great Dane!! Otherwise, rent or purchase a carrier or crate which meets airline regulations and affix a LIVE ANIMAL sticker. Mark it with your name and address and the name of a person who can be contacted about your Great Dane at your destination if necessary. Put your dog's name in a clear place so that everyone passing can use it and help him feel more at ease.

- Put a cushion or blanket on the crate floor. Attach a water bowl to the crate door. The bowl should be deep, but not too full of water to avoid spilling.
- On the day of the flight, take your Great Dane for a long walk before leaving for the airport.
- At the end of the trip, pick up your Great Dane promptly.
- Be prepared for your Great Dane to spend time in quarantine at foreign destinations. Ask your travel agent or the consul of the country you plan to visit about quarantines.

### At your destination

At your vacation site, observe all regulations regarding dogs. Confine your Great Dane in a carrier or restricted space when leaving it alone. Your consideration will help keep dogs welcome as guests.



# Common Great Dane Illnesses

Many of the physical health problems that most Great Danes are susceptible to, such as hip and elbow dysplasia are caused by over-breeding. However, many other illness that affect Danes are common health issues that are a risk factor for almost every breed.

## Dog Worms And How To Cure Them

Every single Great Dane in the world is susceptible to dog worms (internal parasites). From the eerily fatal Heartworm, carried by mosquitoes, to the relatively benign Roundworm, all dogs should undergo regular fecal exams, and parasite prevention.

It is important to know about the possible dog worms that can affect your pet because you can catch them too. As you interact with your dog, you are susceptible, as are any children in your home.

Worms are another everyday problem in adult Great Danes, but it is the puppies that are more likely to get sick from worms. The infected dog will lose weight and become weak, suffer from upset stomach, poor growth, listlessness or even lung trouble. Worms may impede your puppy's growth and cause him to have a potbelly, or be thin and have a shoddy-looking coat.

Your grown Great Dane may not be showing any sign of worms, but he could spread them more than the sick puppy, through large amount of larvae or eggs passed out in the feces. Released into the surrounding, these larvae and eggs could infect other animals and even children.

In more serious cases, your dog will catch cough, pneumonia and develop lung problems.

### The most common dog worms

There are different types of worms that infect dogs such as tapeworm, roundworm, ringworm and heartworm.

### Roundworm

The most common internal parasite, roundworms are especially prevalent in puppies. Puppies are often infested in utero, from a roundworm infested mother.

The roundworms (toxocara) live and produce hundreds of eggs in the intestine.

They cause digestive upset in puppies, poor growth, and thin or out-of-conditioned coat.

The infected puppies may become listless, have a potbelly or tucked in appearance.

Once the roundworms migrated from the gut to the lungs, your Great Dane can suffer lung damage, cough and pneumonia.

The roundworm eggs in your dog droppings get passed out and about.

These are very hardy eggs, resistant to heat and cold, and can survive up to 7 years in the soil. The eggs can pass on to children through ingestion and cause them to fall sick as well.

As precautions, you can toilet train your Great Dane puppy to use a place where you can easily clean up and dispose of the droppings into the sewer. Have your children wash their hands every time after they handle the puppies, and discourage your puppies from licking people's hands or faces.

### Heartworm

Heartworms, left untreated, will be fatal. These deadly dog worms are spread by mosquitoes, and take up residence inside the muscles of the heart. Prevention is very much recommended.

### Whipworm

Whipworms are long, whip-shaped dog worms that take up residence in your dog's colon. Eggs are shed and diagnosis can be made three months later through a veterinarian fecal exam. Weight loss, anemia, and fresh blood in the stool are signs of a heavy infestation.

### Hookworm

Hookworms are minuscule (12 to 15 mm) intestinal worms that hook onto the intestinal wall and consume copious amounts of blood. A hookworm infestation can kill a puppy before the eggs are ever discovered in a fecal exam. It is extremely important to test all dogs on a regular basis, as hookworms are not only very contagious to other pets, but also to humans.



## Tapeworm

The most common dog tapeworm is transmitted through fleas. The most common sign of infestation is discovering the egg sacks around the anus. Egg sacks look like grains of rice that may or may not be moving. Treatment is accomplished by a prescription from your veterinarian. Due to the nature of tapeworms, regular deworming medication will not help.

As part of the tapeworm's life cycle occurs in the flea that acts as the host, if your Great Dane has tapeworms it has fleas also, and the treatments for both are usually prescribed together by the vet.

The tapeworms have a flat, segmented body. You see them as single segments or chains that resemble segments of rice in the droppings of infected canine.

## Common signs of dog worms

Some of the common signs of worm infections are listed below, but these may also be symptoms of other illnesses. When ever your pet is acting ill, we always recommend an examination of your pet and an analysis of a fecal sample.

- A change in your dog's appetite
- A distended abdomen in puppies
- Coughing or hiccupping resulting from the coughing up of worm larvae emerging from the lungs
- Weight loss
- Weakness
- A dull coat
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Observing the worms-either round worm, which looks like spaghetti, or tapeworm segments that look like grains of rice in the stool or on the fur
- Exercise intolerance, due to heartworm

## Steps to prevent dog worms

Regular veterinary check-ups and fecal exams are an important part of responsible dog ownership, and the only way to ensure your best friend stays parasite free (and you too!).

De-worm your Great Dane puppy every month and your grown Great Dane, every 6 months.

Have your veterinarian screen your dog for worms twice a year - and more often if your dog is at high risk of a worm infection.

Examples of high risk Great Danes are those animals living in crowded urban

areas, show pets, hunting dogs, and multiple pet households. Worm your dogs regularly.

Control fleas, which can carry certain tapeworms. These tapeworms can be transmitted to dogs or people who accidentally swallow an infected flea.

Prevent your dog from eating animal carcasses, such as rabbits and rodents, which may contain immature tape worms that will mature in your dog

Maintain good hygiene. For instance, whipworm and roundworm eggs dropped to the soil in your dog's feces can remain infectious for years, while hook worm larvae can accumulate in the earth of a dog run. All can reinfect your Great Dane. Rapid removal of feces is important. Pave over your dog run. This is much safer than having a soil or gravel surface in which worms can survive.



## Flea Infected Great Danes

Flea-infected Great Danes can develop skin diseases, especially those allergic to fleas.

Black specs in the fur and bite marks on the skin will tell you if your Great Dane has them. To check further, spread some newspapers and place your Great Dane on top. Brush him and look for the black specs falling off.

Fleas live up to 6 weeks, feeding on blood and during that time would have laid hundreds of eggs that mostly land on your Dane's bedding, carpets and other favorable nests around your home.

The eggs hatch into larvae that seek nice, dark places while feeding on flea's droppings, dust, human shed skin, dandruff and other such tasty morsels.

The larvae turn into hardy pupae that could survive for months before changing into adult fleas.

Fleas are host to tapeworms. Both problems are likely to occur together in your Great Dane and, therefore, the treatments are also usually given together by the vet.

A bit of garlic a day may keep the fleas away from your Great Dane.

### Dog flea control: Finding and curing fleas

Effective dog flea control requires the three P's! Pets, Premise and Persistence

1. Pets - control of fleas on your dog
2. Premise - control of dog fleas in your environment
3. Persistence - controlling dog fleas is an ongoing battle.

Environmental dog flea control is probably the more important of the two. Adult dog fleas on your canine account for as little as 5% of the total flea population. Dog fleas can be shared by cats and dogs, so if you have a cat, it must also be treated.

Dog fleas feeding on your dog can cause several problems:

- Itching and scratching at the flea bite-in most dogs, the itching is mild and temporary
- Some Great Danes become allergic to flea saliva and develop severe itching, hair loss, and skin damage from scratching and biting at the site. If left untreated a skin infection can develop
- Tapeworm infestation-dog fleas are an essential part of the tapeworm's life cycle, your dog is infested with tapeworms when it swallows a flea that contains immature tapeworm stages
- Anemia-loss of red blood cells. This occurs only with severe flea infestations, and usually occurs only in young or sick animals

### Finding dog fleas

It is easy to tell when your Great Dane is heavily infested with dog fleas. You can see the fleas crawling over your dog's skin and through the hair.

However, if your dog has only a light infestation, you may not see any fleas unless you look for them. A common place to see fleas is on your dog's belly and the inside of the thighs, where the hair is thin or the skin is bare. Another place to look for dog fleas is in the dense hair over your dog's rump, especially near the base of the tail. Part the hair and inspect the skin for either fleas or flea dirt.

Flea dirt is actually flea droppings. It looks like black grains of sand or cracked pepper on your dog's skin. If you place a few particles of flea dirt on a white surface (e.g. a piece of paper) and wet them, you will see a reddish brown stain form. This is because droppings from dog fleas contain digested blood from the flea's blood meal. You may also notice tiny areas of dried blood on your dog's bedding from moistened flea dirt that has since dried.

## Dog flea control

There are many excellent products that if used appropriately are excellent for dog flea control on your pet.

There are numerous products that will kill adult dog fleas on your dog. However, they vary in the duration of their effects:

## Flea shampoos, sprays, and powders

Most will kill any dog fleas at the time of application, but they have no lasting effect.

Your dog may have more fleas within 24 hours of being treated

Some of the newer sprays can be safely used every day, if necessary

## Flea rinses (dips)

These may provide effective dog flea control for 4-5 days, depending on the product purchased. The rinse is applied after your dog has been shampooed; it is left to dry on your dog's coat

## Sprays containing flea growth regulators

Depending on the product, these sprays are usually applied weekly. The growth regulators help break the flea's life cycle, this makes for more effective dog flea control.

## Flea collars

Can be give effective dog flea control for a couple of weeks. Flea collars are not very effective in warm, humid climates (environments that are ideal for immature flea development)

Some dogs are sensitive to flea collars and develop skin irritation under the collar. If this happens, you should remove the collar and use another method of flea control

## Spot on products

Advantage® and Frontline® are two brand name products that are applied to a small area of your dog's skin; they effectively kill fleas for at least a month.

They kill the adult dog fleas, usually before the flea has had a chance to bite your dog. Be sure to select the appropriate package for your dog's body weight

## Program®

This is a tablet that sterilizes any eggs laid by the fleas that feed on your dog. You must give your dog the tablet once a month for effective dog flea control. This drug does not kill the adult dog fleas on your pet, but it does break the flea life cycle by preventing hatching of the next generation of flea eggs. Consult your veterinarian for a recommendation on what would work best for your pet.

## Manage your environment

Dog flea control in your pet's environment is fairly simple for indoor dogs, especially if you have no other pets that regularly go outside. It is impossible to rid the outside environment of all fleas. Dog flea control in pets that regularly go outside or live outside can be more difficult.

Unless you have strictly indoor pets, environmental dog flea control must target both your house and your yard:

### House

Use a fogger or long-lasting spray to kill any adult and larval fleas

If you have a particularly bad problem with dog fleas, it is often worth having a professional exterminator treat your home

Dog fleas in the pupal (cocoon) stage are resistant to insecticides, including foggers, so it may be necessary for you to treat your home 2 or 3 times to get rid of all fleas

The second treatment should be done 2 weeks after the first

You should also wash or otherwise treat your dog's bedding on a regular basis

### Yard / Garden

Spray your yard with an insecticide that has residual activity for at least 30 days

For a difficult flea problem, consider having an exterminator treat your yard

In warm, humid climates, it may be necessary to spray your yard every 30 days during the warmer months of the year

Some newer products contain a growth regulator (fenoxycarb) and need to be applied only once or twice a year

With the new residual treatments for your Great Dane, environmental control is less important. In some cases, using these products on your dog effectively controls the flea population in the environment. Consult your veterinarian for more information on controlling fleas in your pet's environment.



## Great Dane Allergies

Great Danes, like humans, can also suffer from allergies. Most common Great Dane allergies are itching of the skin. The respiratory tract can be affected causing coughing, sneezing, and/or wheezing. At times, the eyes and nose may develop a discharge. Also, the digestive system may be affected causing vomiting or diarrhea.

The most common dog allergies usually fall into one of the following; skin allergies, flea allergies, food allergies, inhalant allergies, contact allergies, or bacterial allergies.

### Skin allergies

An allergic skin disease of dogs, known as canine atopic dermatitis, is caused by your dog's immune system hypersensitivity to common substances in the environment, such as dust mites or molds.

The signs of atopic dermatitis usually appear within the first two years of a dog's life.

If your dog begins to groom excessively, with licking or chewing of the paws, abdomen, and hind quarters, then it may suffer from atopic dermatitis. Also, check to see if the ears are reddened and hot to the touch.

Signs of dog allergies of this type are in the armpits, groin, or between the toes of the paws. Check to see if there is saliva staining. In light colored dogs, it appears as a red-brown staining. In chronic cases the skin, mostly in the abdomen, may change color from a pinkish, to angry red, to black mottling.

Other dog allergies like flea allergy, food allergy, and parasitic infestations may mimic the symptoms of atopic dermatitis making it difficult to diagnose. Once fleas, foods, and parasitic infestations are eliminated as being the offending culprits, then allergy skin testing for dust mites, pollens, and molds may be done to determine what causes your dog's atopic dermatitis.

## Flea allergies

The most common form of dog allergies is flea allergy dermatitis. The flea itself is not the culprit in canine flea allergies. It is their saliva that causes the allergic reaction.

A skin allergy test can be performed to determine if a dog is allergic to flea saliva. If it is, then a strict flea control regimen is required to reduce symptoms to dog allergies of this kind. Caution must be used however to make sure the chemicals in the flea preparations are not harmful to your dog.

## Inhalant allergies

Just like humans, canine inhalant dog allergies can be caused by pollens (tree, grass, and weed), dust mites, molds, and chemicals.

Although any pure bred or mutt can acquire inhalant allergies, the most common breeds that are affected by these dog allergies include Terriers, Poodles, Golden s, German Shepherds, Irish Setters, Dalmatians, Miniature Schnauzers, Pugs and Shih Tzus.

The symptoms of an inhalant allergy include scratching, biting, chewing at feet and constant licking. The itching may be most severe on feet, flanks, groin, and armpits.

Inhalant allergies are often the reason for recurrent ear infections in your dog.

## Food allergies

Great Danes can become allergic to a food they have eaten for years, which causes many people to over look the possibility of a food allergy.

Food allergies only account for 10 percent of dog allergies. Common food allergies to food include; chicken, beef, pork, milk, fish, eggs, corn, wheat, soy, artificial sugars and chemical preservatives.

Determining which food allergen can be time consuming. First, eliminate all the possible allergens from the diet, by using a home made diet consisting of a protein and a starch your dog has not eaten before. Gradually add back, one at a time for a week, the ingredients of your dog food. If symptoms return, then the offending food allergen should be easily determined. Commercial dog foods can be found that do not contain the offending allergen.

Food sensitivities in a Great Dane may manifest as itchy skin, scratching at ears, shaking of the head, licking and biting at the hind quarters or feet, rubbing faces on carpeting, ear inflammations, coughing, and rarely vomiting, diarrhea, flatulence, sneezing, asthma like symptoms, behavioral changes, seizures,

gagging, and vomiting.

### Contact allergies

Contact allergy is the least common of all the types of dog allergies. Some of the common contact allergens include flea collars, wood bedding, grass, plants, and sometimes chemicals.

### Bacterial allergies

Several species of Staphylococcus (Staph) bacteria live on normal dog skin. Normally Staph does not cause a problem with its host, but some Great Danes develop an allergy to it.

With this type of allergy your dog develops areas of hair loss that look much like ring worm. These areas become infected and need to be treated with antibiotics. The Staph allergic dog usually has recurrent Staph infections.



## Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD)

Osteochondritis Dissecans, known as OCD, is a condition that causes the degeneration of underlying bones of the cartilage layer of joints. It often occurs in larger breeds, where young dogs have a fast growth period.

OCD is usually seen in young dogs that are between 6-9 months old, and primarily affect the elbow, ankle or shoulder joints.

OCD is painful, and the dog will show symptoms by limping and favoring infected joints.

Visit your Vet if you suspect OCD in your young Dane, and you will discover that there are a number of ways you can successfully treat this condition by either having any of the torn cartilage surgically removed, or by making sure your dog is well rested, and limited to play time to relieve stress from the joint.

You can help to protect your dog from getting OCD by controlling his or her diet to ensure that they don't become overweight, and also by making sure they don't jump off high ledges, or objects.





## Deafness

The Great Dane is among the more than 35 breeds of dogs on record to have hereditary sensorineural deafness.

The condition cannot be reversed with medications, surgery or hearing aids. Dogs also could become deaf from old age, toxicosis or infection.

How do you tell if your Dane is deaf?

He doesn't respond to spoken commands and only responds to you when he sees you.

He keeps shaking his head and pawing his ears or turns in the wrong direction when you call him.

He sleeps more than normal and would not wake up till you physically touch him.

But not to worry, you can still have a wonderful companion in your deaf Great Dane through sign language.

Dogs have been known to learn as many as 65 command words in sign language. These include signs for, among others, "stop", "potty", "drop it", "stay", "lay down", "sit", "come" and "cookie".

As extra measures, you want to keep the deaf Great Dane in a safe environment as he cannot hear approaching dangers like an approaching car. So keep him on a leash and close to you when in traffic or out for walks.

On his nametag, add the word "deaf" so he will not be misunderstood if he ever gets lost. Some suggest putting a bell as well so you know where to find him if he gets lost.

And finally, if your Great Dane tested positive for inherited deafness in one or both ears, do not breed him or her.



## Epilepsy/ Seizure Disorder

When your Great Dane is between 2 to 5 years old, he may develop a seizure disorder.

**With all dog seizures you need to seek immediate veterinary care**

Dog seizures are due to abnormal electrical conduction within the brain, that results in a loss of consciousness (in most cases), and various physical signs that can be associated with the seizure.

Most dog seizures usually last between 30 seconds to 2 to 3 minutes. It may only take place for 30 seconds but may seem forever to you. You need a veterinarian if it lasts more than 5 minutes.

Emergency treatment is definitely called for if your Great Dane goes into seizure for 10 minutes or longer, twice in the span of 24 hours, or if he has a second attack before he could completely recover from the first seizure attack.

### Physical signs of dog seizures

- Falling over to one side
- Legs "paddling" or generalized trembling/twitching
- Jaw "chomping"
- Salivation
- Urination
- Defecation
- Eyes "rolled back"
- Vocalizing

Most dogs will seem anxious, or seek out their owners prior to the actual seizure, when the above signs can be seen. Don't panic in such instances, and instead time the attack by actually looking at a watch or clock. Remain by your Great Dane's side; be there when he comes out of the seizure to calm him. Stroke and comfort him.

Most likely your dog will then seem disoriented, and "drunk" in appearance, sometimes behaving blind, stumbling about, poorly responsive to his/her environment. This last phase of disorientation with dog seizures can last from as little as 10 minutes to several hours.

To keep your Great Dane from hurting himself during the seizure, place thick cushions, blanket, etc. between your dog's head and any hard furniture and protect him from the stairs any sharp objects, water etc. Unlike seizure attacks in human, animals do not swallow their tongue. So you don't have to put your hand or spoon or any other object into your Great Dane's mouth when he has an

attack. Be very careful to avoid handling your dog's head directly, since this has often resulted in a biting injury to owner's hands.

When in a seizure your dog will be unaware of his/her surroundings, and may bite down very hard on your hand and not even realize it.

Also, keep children and other pets away from your sick Great Dane.

Coming out of the seizure, your Dane will be groggy, confused and feel like he has done something wrong. He may make unusual sounds and stumble around.

Do not allow him on the stairs until he has fully recovered. In the mean time, sooth him by talking to him softly, offer him some water, stroke and comfort him.

If dog seizures last for longer than 5 minutes they may be turning into "status epilepticus" which essentially means a constant state of seizure activity, and if the seizures are not stopped, this can lead to life threatening consequences.

This also can cause some temporary or permanent damage of the brain tissue. If a seizure climbs towards 5 minutes, get your dog to a vet immediately.

And if he doesn't recover fully after 30 minutes, consult your veterinarian or any emergency vet facility.

If your pet has more than one seizure in a 24- hour period, this is considered a "cluster" of dog seizures. You need to seek veterinary care once he or she has the second seizure, since this indicates a rapid succession of dog seizures and may require anticonvulsants be started to control these. A "cluster" will often precede "status pilepticus", as indicated above.

### Make a record

Make sure to pay close attention to what you are witnessing. Record in notebook the following: Time the length of the seizure, and record Time the length of the "disoriented" phase that follows the seizure, and record -document exactly what signs were seen (from above list) was it associated with any events e.g.: exercise, eating, drinking, etc ... date and time of seizure.

The information that would be important to your veterinarian regarding such episodes includes:

1. Duration of the attack
2. The type of muscular activity your Great Dane exhibits during seizure
3. Any abnormal behavior during the attack

#### 4. Frequency of the seizure

By keeping a journal, it helps you to know how often your Great Dane is suffering from dog seizures, and are these getting longer, or more violent? This information is important for you vet to help him treat the seizure(s).

The first time your Great Dane has a seizure, your vet may take blood and x-rays to be assessed for any systemic problem that may cause the seizure, as well as, examine your pet for any abnormal neurological or cardiac signs.

### Patterns of dog seizures

Some Great Danes have been known to have one seizure in their lives, while others develop serious repeated dog seizures. Your pet may never seizure again, or may continue to have dog seizures. You play an important role in the diagnosis and proper treatment of your pet's seizures, by providing an accurate history, and seeking veterinary help when indicated.



## Bloat

Gastric torsion or GDV or bloat in your Great Dane *is* life threatening, so bring him to the veterinarian immediately - he will need to be operated on.

This condition can happen suddenly, and usually occurs in dogs with deep chests. GDV causes the stomach to fill with air and twist, resulting in the trapping of the contents in the stomach, causing severe swelling of the abdomen.

The symptoms include restlessness, drooling, nausea and the stomach is bloated (distended abdomen). Your Great Dane may try to vomit and will continue to gag and may possibly throw up stringy looking foam or mucus.



## Cancerous and Benign Tumors

Great Danes are prone to cancer.

Therefore, any time you see a bump on your Great Dane, you should have it checked out. About 20 out of 100 cases are cancerous.

Watch out for both external and internal lumps, eye ulcers and cherry eye as it is often called, as well as demodicosis or skin sores.

Mast cell tumors are malignant and they do not occur very often but can form either in the skin or within the body.

The related disorders reported along such tumors are round raised masses in the skin of your Great Dane, lack of appetite, vomiting and abdominal pain. Check for tarry stools due to bleeding in the upper intestinal tract.

Great Danes of any age can develop mast cell tumors, but older Danes, 8 years or older, are more prone to it.

Never take tumors in your Great Danes lightly, even a small one! The veterinarian will usually want any tumor removed immediately due to their high susceptibility to cancer.

If you notice a lump or bump on your Dane that doesn't go away after a few days, regardless of its size - have it checked by your Vet.



## Cryptorchidism

Cryptorchidism is peculiar to male dogs and a condition present at birth.

This condition occurs when the testicle(s), which developed in the abdomen, fail to descend into the scrotum. The usually underdeveloped and non-functional testicle(s) should be removed, as it could turn cancerous later in life.

If the condition remains after the puppy is more than 2 months old, then the chances are it is permanent.



## Cataracts

Cataracts usually occur in older dogs, but can also appear in younger dogs that are prone to cataracts due to their hereditary, such as Great Danes.

Your vet can diagnose what is know as “juvenile cataracts” in your young dog, and if your canine is in good health, the cataracts can usually be successfully removed surgically.

Cataracts will appear to look like a hazy blue film on your dog’s eye, and if left untreated will cause blindness.



## Atopy

Atopy is itchy (pruritic) skin disease caused by allergy to something the Great Dane breathes in or touch.

It cannot be cured and is the number two common allergic skin condition in dogs, after flea allergy dermatitis. Having fleas would make it worse for your Dane.

A Great Dane suffering from atopy would have itchiness particularly on the hands and feet.

He’d be chewing his paws, scratching his ears, shaking its head, scratching the muzzle or rubbing it on the ground. These same symptoms can also be brought about by food allergy.



## Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence in dogs can be due to a neurological lesion - something not normal with the parts of the nervous system that deal with urine regulation.

A Great Dane with incontinence will dribble urine and if a neurological lesion is the cause, then this has to be removed.

There are also other reasons not related to the nervous system like congenital defect and bacterial urinary tract infection, also known as bacterial cystitis or bladder stone.

If your Great Dane leaves wet spots where he has slept and he has skin irritation from contact with the urine, then he may have incontinence.

However, wet spots around the house alone may simply mean that he is drinking a lot more, and needs to relieve himself but you are not letting him outside frequently enough. Nevertheless keep in mind that straining while urinating and blood in the urine are two signs of bladder stone.



## Heart Ailments

Bradycardia or slow heart rate may be a symptom of thyroid disorder in Danes.

Dilated cardiomyopathy constitutes a serious, emergency case.

Your dog may collapse from this condition, or his back legs may have sudden pain and paralysis.

It is a serious heart condition whereby the heart muscle is enlarged and thin walled. Your Great Dane will experience shortness of breath, coughing and won't be able to handle exercise.



## Elbow Dysplasia

Elbow Dysplasia is a disorder that causes different growth rates in the three essential bones that construct the elbow, resulting in improper development, causing the joints to be loose.

Mild cases of this condition will cause arthritis to develop in the dog, whereas severe cases can lead to OCD.

This condition is hereditary, and often occurs in Danes who come from a long line of interbreeding.

Danes with this condition should be examined by a Vet, who can then provide the owner with treatments, such as possible surgery to help correct the problem, or the prescribing of anti-inflammatory drugs.



## Hip Dysplasia

This is a bone disorder whereby there is an improper fit of the large femur bone with the hip socket, causing lots of pain and lameness.

It occurs more in male than in the female of primarily large breed dogs like Great Danes.

Hip dysplasia is genetic and can be passed on. If you think your Great Dane may have hip problem, take him for x-ray when he is 24 months old for a proper diagnosis. And then, if he is tests positive, do not breed him or her.

It develops in puppies and can show up as early as when the Great Dane is four months old. Or it could shows up much later when he is an old dog, and the hip weakens and becomes arthritic.

Just as with elbow dysplasia, Danes with this condition should be examined by a Vet, who can then provide the owner with treatments, such as possible surgery to help correct the problem, or the prescribing of anti-inflammatory drugs.



## Muscular Dystrophy

Although it is often not fatal, Autosomal Recessive Muscular Dystrophy, better known as ARMD, is a disorder that causes the skeletal muscles to degenerate progressively.

Muscular biopsies, blood tests and electromyography can verify the presence of ARMD, which your dog can be checked for when taken for his regular checkups.

ARMD is usually a hereditary condition.



## Hypothyroidism

This disease concerns the thyroid gland that does not produce enough thyroid hormone, which can cause illness in the Great Dane.

You will find that your Dane will become lethargic, sleep a lot more, not be



interested to play, tires easily and experiences depression or mental dullness.

He may gain weight, and become obese without having to eat more than usual.

There are so many symptoms that vary and are non-specific, all of which develop slowly. The reason for this is because not enough thyroid hormone produced affects the metabolic function of many organ systems.

Other signs of thyroid disorder include slow heart rate (bradycardia), infertility, constipation, diarrhea, as well as your Great Dane not being able to stand the cold, and always seeking a warm place to lie down.

Hypothyroidism may also results in chronic skin disorders like dry skin and excessive hair loss, as well as other neurological and hormonal abnormalities.

A single symptom may not point to thyroid deficiency, but a combination of them should make your veterinarian more suspicious of it.



## Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Great Dane's having IBS will not gain weight, seem lethargic and have pale color mucus membrane in the mouth (oral mucosa) and eyes (eye scleras).

Monitor their stool for frank or occult blood, and start with a blood test to check for hematocrit (abdominal bleeding), which could save their life. This condition can be caused by food allergy.

In one case, the male Great Dane diagnosed with IBS of the small intestine was failing to thrive and began to have syncopal episodes (fainting spells).

The owner put him on a strictly venison diet and he finally thrived, gained weight and is very active. The owner said many butcher shops sell venison and it is very reasonably priced.



## Kidney Problems

Preventing kidney damage is key to your Dane's survival.

If you suspect your Great Dane may have kidney trouble, take him to the veterinarian for aggressive treatment.

Remember the concern over too much grapes or raisins is toxic for dogs and could ruin their kidneys?

Aggressive treatment in such poisoning cases means, if your Great Dane had just overindulged in the grapes/raisins, the doctor will induce vomiting immediately and prescribe some activated charcoal pills.

There will be repeated blood tests to determine the status of kidney function plus hospitalization and intravenous fluid therapy if necessary.

The induced vomiting is to remove as much grapes or raisins as possible while the activated charcoal is to help prevent absorption of the toxic substance.

Two days of intravenous fluid therapy is often recommended to help prevent damage to the kidneys.

Blood test is usually repeated after 48 hours and 5 to 7 days to ensure the kidneys are functioning within the normal range.

Where kidney damage has occurred, the intravenous fluid therapy shall continue until blood tests indicate the kidneys have returned to normal function again.



## Progressive Retinal Atrophy

This disorder causes the retina to slowly deteriorate, and is a condition that is usually hereditary.

Infected dogs with PRA will become “nightblind”, and will not be able to see in dim light. As the disease progresses, the dog will eventually become completely blind.

If you suspect your Dane might have PRA, your dog can undergo a retinoscopic exam, which is the only test that can diagnose this condition.

Once diagnosed, your vet may be able to provide you with possible treatment options.



## Dog Arthritis

Dog arthritis is a common, painful condition that affects one out of five adult dogs- more than eight million in all. Although there are no miracle cures, much can be done to make old dogs with arthritis more comfortable and improve their lives.

Many Great Dane dogs develop canine arthritis as they age. Although there are no miracle cures, much can be done to make old dogs with arthritis more comfortable and improve their lives.

Dog arthritis occurs when joint cartilage begins to split and fragment. The first signs might include stiffness, lagging behind on walks, or perhaps difficulty jumping up. Often, these signs are mistaken as part of the natural aging process however; the real cause is usually arthritis.

Unfortunately, because our Great Dane's can't tell us if and where they hurt, it can be difficult to know that our pet is in pain and not just "getting older". Dog arthritis is one such ailment that can cause pain resulting in changes in behavior. The key is to recognize changes in your pet's behavior and realize that medical intervention may often make a huge difference to bring your pet back to his old self.

### Some Signs of dog arthritis include

- Decreased activity
- Reluctance to walk, run, climb stairs, jump or play
- Stiffness
- Limping
- Difficulty rising from a resting position
- Soreness when touched
- Yelping or whimpering in pain
- Acting aggressive or withdrawn
- Exhibiting other personality changes

If you notice any of these changes, see your veterinarian. The sooner the condition is recognized, the sooner your pet can be helped.

If you suspect your Great Dane may be beginning to suffer with arthritis make visit your veterinarian to identify what's causing your pet's discomfort. If arthritis is the problem, your veterinarian can recommend the best treatment option for your dog's condition, such as:

### Long-term pain canine arthritis pain relief

There are dozens of products for animals intended to relieve Dog arthritis by promoting joint and cartilage health. Their use has become nearly universal among veterinarians, no safety problems have arisen, and they are generally quite effective. Many vets say that every dog showing even the earliest signs of Dog arthritis should be receiving one of these products. They work best in the early stages of arthritis, while there is still reasonable joint function left to preserve.

Medications can soothe your arthritic pet a resort quality of life to your dog.

A non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication that's approved for long-term use, such as Rimadyl, may be prescribed to relieve your dog's pain and inflammation, thereby improving quality of life.

### Rimadyl

Rimadyl is a new non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug given in tablet form and Daneed specifically for dogs, and is effective in relieving pain and inflammation safely, even for dog arthritis long-term use.

### Weight-loss/exercise program

Taking off excess weight will help decrease stress on affected joints, while moderate exercise can help prevent decreased joint function.

### Diet change

Your veterinarian may recommend a diet specially designed to meet your pet's needs, such as Eukanuba Senior Plus, or Hill's G/D

### Soft comfortable place to sleep

Your dog's bed should be as comfortable as your own. An old mattress or soft couch is excellent. Soft foam rubber at least four inches thick is good. Scout around for an old baby mattress

### Gentle, regular exercise

Provide limited, gentle exercise. Once around the block two or three times a day is about right. Avoid strenuous activity on the weekends alternating with little or none during the week



## Wobbler's Syndrome

Wobbler's Syndrome mostly affects large, fast-growing dog breeds. It is most common in the Great Dane, where symptoms first appear between the age of 3 and 18 months.

Symptoms of Wobbler's include weakness, un-coordination and confusion (ataxia). The symptoms worsen slowly over several months. Over time, an affected dog may develop a stiff, high-stepping, and exaggerated gait that gradually worsens. Eventually, all four legs are affected with the hind legs affected first and more severely.

Wobbler's is a painful condition caused by an abnormality in the spine. It is a chronic, progressive disease and without treatment, the dog's condition will gradually deteriorate. With therapy (either medical management or surgery) the prospect for recovery remains guarded.

This condition is believed to have a genetic component but it is not known how it is inherited. A puppy buyer is advised to ask the extent of this problem in the pedigree, siblings and offspring of closely related dogs.



## Medical Terms for Great Dane's Health You Should Know

### Health Terms

Aortic stenosis  
ARMD  
Atopy  
Bacterial sytitis  
Bradycardia  
Cardiac conduction  
  
Cataract  
  
Cherry Eye  
Cold Water Tail  
  
Cryptorchidism  
Demodicosis  
Elbow dysplasia  
  
Eye scleras  
Gastric torsion/GDV  
Hematocrit  
Hip dysplasia  
Hypothyrodism  
IBS  
Incontinence  
Mast cell tumor  
OCD  
Polydipsia  
Polyphagia  
Polyuria  
PRA  
Syncopam episode  
Wobbler's Syndrome

### Descriptions

Heart ailment  
Muscular Dystrophy  
Itchy skin disease  
Bladder stones  
Slow heart rate  
Heart ailment pertaining to irregular heart beat  
Film that grows on eye leading to blindness  
Eye Ulcer  
Horizontally hanging tail that appears fractured  
Undescended testicle  
Non-contagious mange  
Genetic disorder of elbow bones and joints  
Mucus membrane in the eyes  
Bloat  
Abdominal bleeding  
Genetic disorder of the hip bones  
Disorder of the thyroid gland  
Irritable bowel syndrome  
Poor control of urination  
Malignant tumor  
Osteochondritis Dissecans  
Increased water consumption  
Increased appetite  
Increase urination  
Progressive Retinal Atrophy  
Fainting spell  
Weakness, un-coordination and confusion (ataxia)



## Conclusion

Now that you have learned many interesting and exciting facts about the Great Dane from this ebook, you have every opportunity to improve upon the health of your faithful companion, train him and make him a welcoming – large – addition to your family.

Remember to take your Dane to the vet for regular checkups, feed him a healthy diet, give him attention, as well as plenty of exercise to help him remain happy, in shape, and build up his immune system.

Don't forget that obedience plays a key role in the development of your Great Dane, and will determine how he will respond to you, and others. Take the time to teach your Dane, so all of the rewarding characteristics linked to his breed can be brought out in him.

The more you learn about the nature of your Dane, the better you will be able to understand him, and know how to respond to any problems that may arise. This will also help him understand you.

Without question, a Great Dane is your forgiving and loyal friend until it is time for him to depart from this world. He will never want anything more from you than your love, attention and company, and will show you the true meaning of what it feels like to be loved unconditionally.

You will find that before long you will have stories of your own to share, just like some of the owners found in this ebook, and you too will know all about the joys, frustrations and love that is involved when selecting and training a Great Dane as your companion.

Truly, there is no better companion than that of a faithful, loyal, loving, and sizeable dog. Enjoy raising your Great Dane, and may he or she live as a friend and asset to you, and be apart of your family for years to come.

