

# Congratulations on your New puppy!

The Bichon Frise Club of America, Inc. wishes to extend best wishes to you and your new Bichon Frise! You have begun your lifelong commitment to your Bichon by registering it with the American Kennel Club. Now is the time to get your dog started on a long and healthy life by following certain guidelines that will assure the 14 to 16 happy and healthy years that can be expected of most Bichons.

We assume you did your homework before purchasing your pet. You learned that Bichon Frise (pronounced “Be-shahn Freezey”) means “curly lapdog.” This is your clue that this breed is primarily a companion animal. That means he needs lots of human attention. Leaving a Bichon alone for 9-10 hours a day is asking for problems in house training and mischief making.

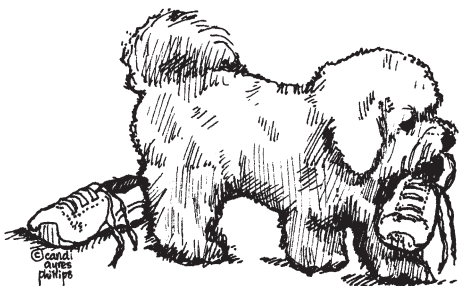
## **How can I properly house train my Bichon?**

The use of a crate is the best method to insure success. This means the pet is crated whenever he is unattended, including nights, until he can be counted on to be clean in the house.

As to the mischief (meaning at least moderately destructive behavior to furniture and drapes), you will find that same crate will be handy to prevent the chewing that pups go through when teething.

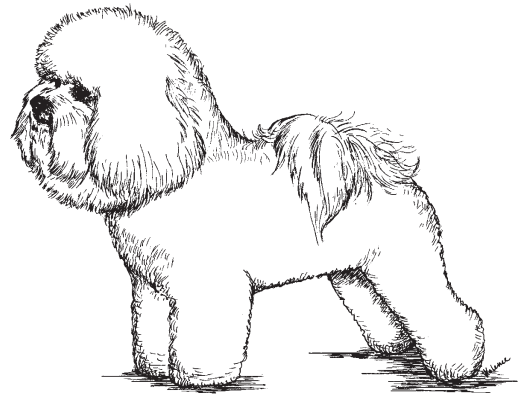
## **Are Bichons normally healthy?**

Good veterinary care is essential and your vet will advise you on vaccinations, the need in your area for heartworm preventive



medication and when to have your pet’s teeth cleaned professionally. The Bichon is known to suffer early tooth loss and sometimes complications from gum infection if dental care is not a priority.

Other health problems are allergies, including skin reactions and flea allergy; bladder infections; ear infections if the ear canal is not kept clean and free of hair; weakness in knee joints (patellar luxation); and genetic cataracts and other eye disease. Study your pet’s pedigree. If the parents have been registered with Canine Eye Registry Foundation (CERF) or Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), the parents names will be followed by registration numbers which include these prefixes. There are articles on Bichon health on our website at [www.bichon.org](http://www.bichon.org). Reading these articles can help you to offset



potential problems by being alert to symptoms and will help you know how to care for your Bichon should any of these conditions occur.

## **Should my Bichon ever be used for breeding?**

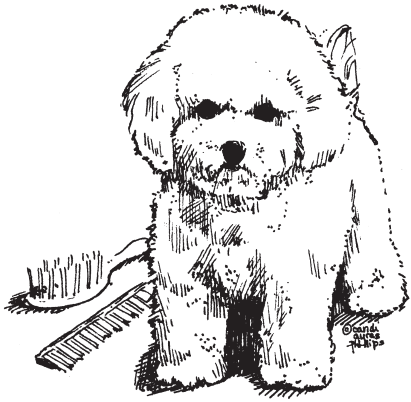
If you purchased your Bichon as a pet from a show breeder, you were probably asked to sign a contract agreeing to neuter/spay your Bichon. There is a very sound reason for doing this. The breeder has spent years learning the health background, the temperament and the physical attributes of your Bichon’s ancestors and has determined your animal is of companion quality and should not be used for breeding.

Even if you have not signed a contract to do so, it is in the animal’s best interest healthwise to neuter him or spay her. Unneutered males suffer prostate problems, including cancer, at an extremely high rate. For every season that the female goes through, her chances of mammary gland cancer will increase. Both of these conditions tend to occur in what would be midlife, possibly shortening the life of the Bichon by at least 6 years—or more! Why risk it—or risk producing unhealthy pups that come from combining genetic problems in the parents? The Bichon gene pool is quite small and the health problems increase with every generation of poorly planned matings! If you have purchased a show quality Bichon and wish to consider breeding, we encourage you to seek guidance and direction from the Bichon Frise Club of America, Inc., directing your questions through the Information Chairman listed below.

## **What do I do with all this hair?**

You probably learned before purchasing your pet that this is a breed needing a lot of grooming! You can learn to take care of the coat entirely at home or you can combine home care with professional grooming. The Bichon does not shed and the hair grows constantly. Regardless of which choice you make, daily brushing and combing is needed to keep the coat free of mats (which can lead to additional skin problems). Bathing, blow drying the coat and scissoring can be done monthly or as needed but the daily care is up to YOU! The Bichon Frise Club





of America, Inc. has prepared a booklet, *Your Bichon Frise*, that will be of great value in learning how to care for your pet in every way. There is information on grooming, on house training, on obedience, diet, etc. You may purchase this booklet for \$6.00 by writing to the Sales Chairman whose address is listed on this pamphlet. (One dollar of the purchase price goes to Bichon health research.)

***I need to take care of the coat, the teeth and the health of my puppy. What else should I do to keep him happy and healthy?***

Every dog benefits from obedience training. There are books available for home training but a short obedience course with a qualified training instructor can make a difference in many ways. Bichons are “show-offs” and love to perform. The work they do in obedience becomes a game—but the obedient dog is also a safer dog! The Bichon is a very fast little guy (a fenced yard is also a good thing) and the trained dog is less likely to run into the street. Unfortunately not all Bichons are natural heelers and their curiosity can be their doom! Your dog should never be off lead in a public area—many cities have extremely strict leash laws which entail heavy fines. (You are also expected to clean up after your pet!)

***My puppy seems very friendly? Will he stay that way?***

The natural temperament of the Bichon Frise is to be outgoing and friendly (though he may initially seem somewhat aloof in some situations). The puppy that is fearful, extremely shy or shows any sign of aggression is not exhibiting typical Bichon behavior! These Bichons need obedience training and careful socialization and can usually be taught to trust. The earlier the training, the better. Forceful correction is not appropriate but neither is cuddling the pet and allowing it to shrink into the arms of the owner. The idea is to socialize him until he learns that his world is safe and obedience training is a good start. Puppy kindergarten is an excellent beginning and should be investigated very early for all pups.

Your primary goal is to get your new pup off to a good start by attending to his needs:

1. proper health care
2. good diet and plenty of fresh water
3. proper grooming
4. training for the pup’s safety and your increased enjoyment of your pet

Keep your Bichon safe and healthy, train him well and maintain his skin, teeth and coat. In return, he will be your loving companion, trusting friend and let you know when company

arrives. Bichons are great conversationalists and love to entertain. What more can you ask?



***Does my puppy need a playmate?***

If he is left alone a lot, a friend would fill the lonely hours. For ease of training, the pups should be of different ages (train the first before bringing in another puppy) and different litters (a littermate may try to dominate the other). Obviously you will want to neuter both at the earliest possible age to avoid health problems and “marking” territory—and these dainty little girls will also “mark” unless spayed.

***What is the origin of the Bichon?***

The Bichon is of Mediterranean ancestry, descending from the Barbet or Water Spaniel, and is related to the Maltese. He is not part Poodle. Bichons have been a distinct breed since about 1400. A few Bichons came to this country in the 1950s, primarily from France and Belgium. The Bichon Frise Club of America was founded in 1964 and the breed recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1972. The Bichon is a strong competitor in the Non-Sporting Group and has proven to be an excellent competitor in the new Agility competition! The sturdy, muscular and sound Bichon is quite athletic and you should expect this “lap dog” to give you a good time with his playful antics.

***What else should I know about my Bichon Frise?***

The Bichon Frise is a fluffy white dog, though there may be some touches of buff or apricot on a puppy. This will usually fade with time. Lips, eye rims, halos and foot pads should be black. He should stand 9½ to 11½ inches at the shoulder as an adult and will weigh about 10 to 16 pounds, unless much smaller or much larger than the standard calls for. A quality dog food, preferably dry kibble purchased at a pet or feed and seed store, is the recommended diet. Over- or underweight dogs are less likely to stay healthy, so lots of extra treats are not a good idea! Access to a bowl of fresh water is essential.

For more information, we suggest you contact our Information Chairman:

Nancy Noonan  
(860) 691-1200

Booklet Orders to:

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