



# The Chihuahua

*“a graceful, alert, swift-moving little dog with saucy expression ...”*

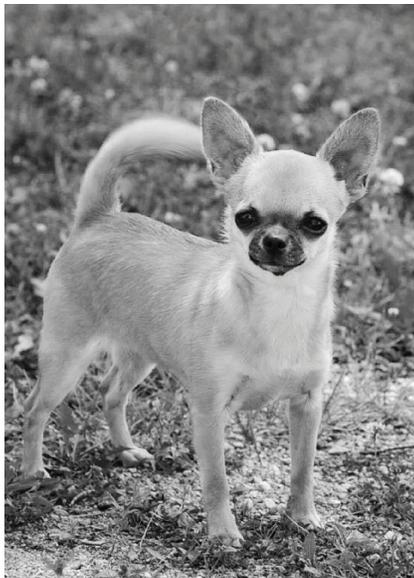
The Chihuahua is the most recognizable, yet least understood of all dog breeds. Each one of these little dogs is unique. Whether your Chihuahua is a Smooth coat or Long coat, a beloved pet or a dog competing in sports, the members of the Chihuahua Club of America are eager to help you and your companion get off to a great start! Sharing your life with these small wonders is a constant mission of discovery.

## Safety

Chihuahuas are highly intelligent and not to be underestimated for their diminutive size. These sassy little dogs have an independent streak but are happy to please their owners when asked. Early training and socialization is a must. Their small size makes them somewhat fragile. According to the AKC Breed Standard, Chihuahuas are six pounds or smaller. These tiny little dogs do not realize how small they are and can be defenseless with young children and large dogs. Keeping them safe from harm is imperative. It is advisable to keep your Chihuahua on a leash whenever you are in public. This will enable you to quickly pull your Chihuahua out of harm's way, and will prevent the dog from running away when frightened. Because of their tiny size, they should be kept indoors and never left alone when outside.

## Feeding

Chihuahuas have higher metabolisms and should be fed twice a day using a premium dog food. Young puppies should have food available at all



times to prevent hypoglycemia. Hypoglycemia means low blood sugar. It can occur if a puppy has gone too long between meals or has become chilled and/or stressed. A puppy that has become hypoglycemic will lack energy and become listless. Corn syrup and honey (diluted 50-50

with water) are readily available items you can give your puppy to restore its sugar balance. If it does not respond immediately seek veterinary assistance as hypoglycemia can be life threatening. Be careful not to over feed your adult Chihuahua as obesity can create health issues and shorten your pet's lifespan. Fresh water should always be readily available to your Chihuahua.

## Grooming Your Chihuahua

Chihuahua's keep themselves well groomed. Puppies should be bathed as needed with a mild, puppy safe shampoo and kept warm and out of drafts until completely dry. Adults can be bathed as needed, about once a month.



Chihuahuas should be brushed regularly, especially the long coat variety. Brush your Chihuahua's teeth regularly, provide appropriate chew toys and have your veterinarian check his teeth yearly. Poorly maintained teeth may lead to other health problems. Clean ears with a cotton ball and mild ear cleaner made for dogs. If the inside of the ear is red, irritated, has a foul odor or a dark brown residue, have your dog checked by a veterinarian. Trim your Chihuahua's nails regularly. If you do not feel comfortable with this procedure, have your veterinarian or a groomer do it. Untrimmed nails can create splayed feet and make walking uncomfortable for your pet.

## Health Care

Ask your Chihuahua's breeder and/or other toy breed owners to recommend a good vet. Your puppy should come with a shot record provided by his/her breeder. Puppies should be kept close to home until all the required puppy shots have been given. Your

veterinarian can advise you on how to continue to keep your puppy healthy and free of fleas, heartworms and other parasites. Keeping up with immunizations is strongly recommended to prevent serious disease. Rabies is required by law.

## Molera

Historically, the Chihuahua has displayed a "soft spot" on the top of the head. This spot, or fontanel, is known as a Molera, and is the same as that found in human babies. Some of these soft spots close completely as your dog matures; others remain small and are not detrimental to your dog. In the past, the molera was accepted as a mark of purity in the breed. A domed head with a molera present does not predispose the Chihuahua to hydrocephalus.

## Teacup Myth

Our breed standard recognizes two varieties of Chihuahuas, the long coat and the smooth coat. According to the AKC Chihuahua Standard, Chihuahuas are to weigh six pounds or under. Occasionally, within a litter, there may be a puppy that is unusually small. That puppy is a small Chihuahua and any other breakdown in description is not correct.

## Activities

Regardless of what type of activities you choose, your Chihuahua will be happy to simply be with you. If you are interested in participating in dog sports, the American Kennel Club provides a variety of events for owners and their dogs. The Chihuahua Club of America offers annual Specialties in Conformation and Companion Events. Conformation shows can be a fun family activity and there is a Junior Showmanship program for the kids. Canine Good Citizen® (CGC), is an award given to dogs who demonstrate basic good manners and social skills. With continued training an interested owner of a Chihuahua can also participate

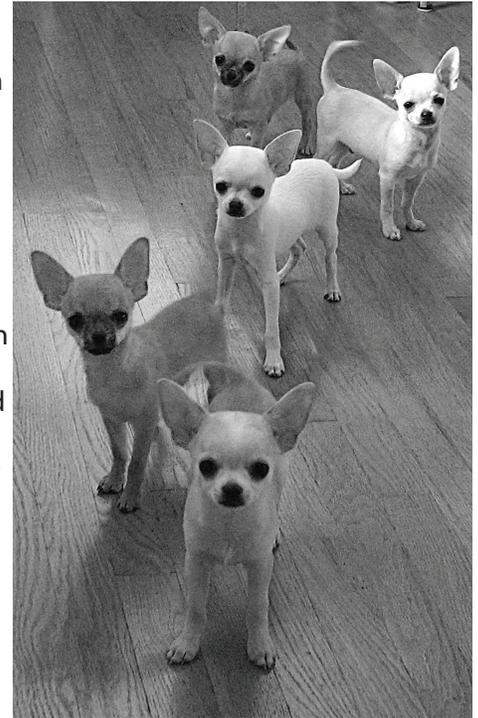
in Agility, Obedience, Rally, Tracking and Iron Dog.

## Responsible Dog Ownership

Unless your dog is to compete in the Conformation competition, it should be spayed or neutered. This will eliminate the risk of cancer in the reproductive organs, as well as reduce the birth complications in the females.

Accidental breeding can have fatal results for the dam. After neutering, a male Chihuahua will be less prone to wandering, aggressive behaviors, and marking their territory. Work with your veterinarian to establish the best time to spay or neuter. Recent studies show improved long-term health when spay/neuter is delayed until maturity. AKC allows the exhibiting of spayed/neutered dogs in any of its Companion Events sports.

Should you find that you can no longer keep your Chihuahua for any reason, *do not take your Chihuahua to a shelter*. A dog the size of a Chihuahua does not fare well in shelter conditions. First, contact the breeder you obtained your dog from to ask for their assistance. You can also contact the Chihuahua Club of America for Rescue information to assist you in finding a good home for your Chihuahua.



## Health Testing for Chihuahuas

- **ORTHOPEDIC FOUNDATION FOR ANIMALS, OFA**  
[www.offa.org](http://www.offa.org)  
Cardiac, Patellas, Thyroid, Legg-Calves-Perthes
- **CANINE EYE REGISTRY FOUNDATION, CERF**  
[www.offa.org/eyes.html](http://www.offa.org/eyes.html)
- **AKC/CANINE HEALTH FOUNDATION (CHIC)**  
[www.akcchf.org](http://www.akcchf.org)
- **CCA CHIC REWARD PROGRAM**  
After completion of ALL tests  
[www.chihuahuaclubofamerica.org](http://www.chihuahuaclubofamerica.org)

## For more information on the Chihuahua

*please visit*



**The Chihuahua Club of America, Inc.**  
[www.ChihuahuaClubOfAmerica.org](http://www.ChihuahuaClubOfAmerica.org)

**The American Kennel Club**  
The Online AKC Gazette  
[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

We have many articles on our website and are most eager to help you in any way we can!  
[www.chihuahuaclubofamerica.org](http://www.chihuahuaclubofamerica.org)