

# “Insider’s Guide To The Most Healthy, Happiest & Well Behaved Bichon Frise In the Street!”



Pic Courtesy of Linda Padar, Islind Bichons, Canada  
<http://members.tripod.com/~Islind>

# CONTENTS

<b>CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1 ALL ABOUT THE BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HISTORY AND EARLY BEGINNINGS OF THE BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>BREED STANDARDS FOR THE BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Head .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Body .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Movement.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Coat.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Size .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT A BICHON FRISE?.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2 IS A BICHON FRISE RIGHT FOR YOU? .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>IS A BICHON FRISE RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY? .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>Highly Social .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Intelligent.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Adaptable .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Watchdogs, But Not Good Guard Dogs .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Quick to Learn .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<b>CHOOSING A MALE OR A FEMALE DOG.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Males .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>FEMALES .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>SIMILARITIES.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>3 GETTING A BICHON FRISE.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>DECIDING ON A PUPPY OR ADULT BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>THE BENEFITS OF A BICHON FRISE PUPPY .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>DIFFICULTIES WITH A BICHON FRISE PUPPY.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>BENEFITS OF AN ADULT BICHON FRISE.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>THE PROBLEMS WITH AN ADULT BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>WHERE TO BUY A BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Rescue Shelters .....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Pet Stores.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Breeders.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<b>FINDING A GOOD BICHON FRISE BREEDER .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<i>WHY GET A PUPPY FROM A BICHON FRISE BREEDER? .....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK A BICHON FRISE BREEDER? .....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>WHAT SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED ABOUT? .....</i>	<i>31</i>
<b>HOW MUCH WILL A BICHON FRISE COST? .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>CHOOSING A HEALTHY BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>HEALTHY BICHON FRISE PUPPIES .....</i>	<i>33</i>

<i>CHOOSING A HEALTHY ADULT BICHON FRISE</i> .....	35
<b>REGISTRIES, REFERRALS AND CONTRACTS .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>CONTRACTS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>Bill of sale</i> .....	37
<i>Health guarantee</i> .....	37
<i>Registration application</i> .....	37
<i>Pedigree</i> .....	37
<i>Breeding limitations or spay and neuter clauses</i> .....	38
<i>Health notification</i> .....	38
<i>Showing dogs</i> .....	38
<i>Rehoming dogs</i> .....	38
<b>4 BRINGING YOUR BICHON FRISE HOME .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>BRINGING HOME A NEW BICHON FRISE PUPPY.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<i>Supplies</i> .....	40
<i>Safety</i> .....	42
<i>Transition</i> .....	43
<i>Attitude</i> .....	43
<i>Expectations</i> .....	44
<i>Eight to Twelve Weeks</i> .....	44
<i>Weeks 12 through 16</i> .....	45
<i>Weeks 16 through to 8 Months</i> .....	45
<i>Month 8 to Month 14</i> .....	46
<i>Maturity</i> .....	46
<b>PREPARING TO BRING HOME A GROWN BICHON FRISE DOG.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>Supplies</i> .....	47
<b>PREPARING YOUR HOME .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>WHAT TO EXPECT .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>INTRODUCING YOUR BICHON FRISE TO OTHERS .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<i>Introducing Your Bichon Frise to Another Dog</i> .....	50
<i>Introducing a Bichon Frise to a Cat</i> .....	50
<i>Introducing Your Bichon Frise to Other Species</i> .....	51
<i>Introducing Your Bichon Frise to Strangers and Children</i> .....	51
<b>CHILD SAFETY AND SMALL DOGS.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>5 YOUR NEW DOG'S NEEDS .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>EXERCISING YOUR BICHON FRISE.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<i>Age</i> .....	55
<i>Puppies</i> .....	55
<i>Adults</i> .....	55
<i>Senior Dogs</i> .....	56
<b>PHYSICAL CONDITION.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<i>Variety</i> .....	57
<b>DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>DIET AND NUTRITION BASICS.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<i>OMNIVORES NOT CARNIVORES</i> .....	60
<b>WHAT ARE THE DIETARY NEEDS OF A BICHON FRISE DOG? .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>WHAT NOT TO FEED YOUR BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>FEEDING YOUR DOG .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>WET VERSUS DRY .....</b>	<b>64</b>

<i>Dry foods</i> .....	64
<i>Canned food</i> .....	65
<i>Semi-moist food</i> .....	65
<b>SCHEDULED FEEDING VERSUS FREE FEEDING .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>HOME COOKING FOR YOUR BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>PREMIUM FOODS .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>6 TRAINING YOUR DOG .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>TIPS FOR TRAINING YOUR BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<i>Make Training Fun</i> .....	70
<i>Make Training Natural</i> .....	70
<i>Keep Training Consistent</i> .....	71
<i>Patience is the Key</i> .....	71
<i>Never Hit a Puppy</i> .....	72
<i>Get in a Routine</i> .....	72
<b>THE BASICS OF DOG TRAINING .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>TEACHING YOUR DOG TO COME .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>TEACHING YOUR DOG TO SIT .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>TEACHING YOUR DOG TO LAY DOWN .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>TEACHING YOUR DOG TO STAY .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>WALKING WITH A LEASH.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>OBEDIENCE TRAINING FOR COMPETITION.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>TRAINING YOUR BICHON FRISE FOR THE SHOW RING.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>HOUSE TRAINING YOUR PUPPY OR DOG.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<i>Crate Training</i> .....	79
<i>Paper Training</i> .....	82
<i>Litter Box Training</i> .....	82
<b>TIPS FOR HOUSE TRAINING AN OLDER BICHON FRISE DOG.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>7 MAINTENANCE OF A HEALTHY BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>GROOMING YOUR BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>BATHING .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>TRIMMING .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<i>Clips and Styles for a Bichon Frise</i> .....	89
<b>EAR CARE FOR DOGS .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<i>General Ear Care</i> .....	91
<i>Yearly Check-Ups</i> .....	92
<b>TEARING.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>CLAW CLIPPING AND CARE FOR CANINES .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<i>Clipping the Nails</i> .....	94
<i>Dewclaws</i> .....	96
<b>VACCINATION REGIMENS .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<i>Side Effects</i> .....	98
<i>Existing Conditions</i> .....	99
<b>8 MEDICAL CARE OF YOUR DOG .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A CURE .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Daily and Weekly</i> .....	101
<i>Monthly</i> .....	102

<b>DENTAL CARE .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<i>Teeth .....</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Proper Care of Canine Teeth .....</i>	<i>104</i>
<i>Concerns .....</i>	<i>105</i>
<b>MEDICAL CARE.....</b>	<b>105</b>
<i>Eye Conditions.....</i>	<i>106</i>
<i>Ear Conditions .....</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>Luxating Patella .....</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>Skin Tags.....</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>Kartagener's Syndrome .....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Skin Allergies .....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Epilepsy.....</i>	<i>112</i>
<i>White Shaker Disease.....</i>	<i>112</i>
<i>Bladder Stones and Urinary Tract Infections.....</i>	<i>112</i>
<i>Anal Glands.....</i>	<i>113</i>
<b>SPAYING AND NEUTERING YOUR DOG.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<i>When to Spay or Neuter.....</i>	<i>114</i>
<b>9 MANAGEMENT OF COMMON BICHON FRISE</b>	
<b>BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>CONTROLLING UNNECESSARY BARKING .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<i>Punishment.....</i>	<i>116</i>
<i>Training.....</i>	<i>116</i>
<b>JUMPING .....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>BITING AND NIPPING.....</b>	<b>117</b>
<i>Training a Puppy.....</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Training Older Dogs.....</i>	<i>118</i>
<b>SEPARATION ANXIETY.....</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>CHEWING AND TEETHING .....</b>	<b>119</b>
<i>Puppies and Chewing.....</i>	<i>119</i>
<b>EATING RELATED PROBLEMS .....</b>	<b>120</b>
<i>Food .....</i>	<i>121</i>
<i>Dental Problems .....</i>	<i>121</i>
<i>Lack of Exercise.....</i>	<i>122</i>
<i>Pica .....</i>	<i>122</i>
<i>Refusing to Eat Versus Finicky Eaters.....</i>	<i>122</i>
<b>COPROPHAGIA.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<i>Correcting the Problem .....</i>	<i>123</i>
<b>MARKING.....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>10 THE AGING DOG .....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>CARE OF THE AGING DOG .....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>ARTHRITIS, PAIN AND STIFFNESS .....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>INCREASED WATER CONSUMPTION .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>BLINDNESS AND HEARING LOSS .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>CHANGES IN WEIGHT AND APPETITE .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>MEMORY OR COGNITIVE LOSS.....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>EXERCISE.....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>FOOD, WATER AND BEDDING.....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>JUMPING UP .....</b>	<b>131</b>

<b>MANAGING INCONTINENCE .....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>ATTENTION.....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>BICHON FRISE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR BICHON FRISE .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>UNITED STATES .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>CANADA .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM .....</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA .....</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>GENERAL DOG SITES .....</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>PICTURE CREDITS.....</b>	<b>139</b>

# 1

## ALL ABOUT THE BICHON FRISE



### **HISTORY AND EARLY BEGINNINGS OF THE BICHON FRISE**

The Bichon Frise dog has been a favorite of royalty as well as of typical families since the beginning of the fourteenth century. These dogs have been immortalized in paintings by artists such as Goya and Titian, which help to confirm the popularity of this breed in several different countries and in different periods of time. There are many different stories or ideas about the actual origins of the breed.

Most breeders agree that the dog was first developed by crossing a small sized Poodle with the Barbet Water Spaniel. There are also breeders that

believe that the Bichon Frise was developed from the Maltese breed crossed with other popular mixed breed lapdogs of the time, most likely predominantly including the Poodle and Barbet Spaniel type breeds.

The Barbet Water Spaniel, more commonly known as the Barbet, is very similar in temperament and characteristics to the Standard Poodle and has been used in the development of many of the European breeds of spaniels and companion dogs.

The Barbet is native to France and has been used as a water spaniel for many centuries in its native country. The Poodle also can trace its history back to early hunting dogs; however, it is more commonly known today as a companion dog. The cross of the two breeds seems to have incorporated the most positive aspects of both into the Bichon Frise. The original name of the Bichon Frise was the Barbichon, which was then shorted to the now common "Bichon".

There were also four distinct types of Bichons found throughout the Mediterranean area and they were the Bichon Teneriffe, Bichon Maltais, Bichon Bolognias, and Bichon Havanais, so named for the locations they were associated with. There are no longer these individual distinctions; rather, there is one recognized breed.

In the early history of the Bichon Frise, the dogs were used a trading commodity throughout their native land of Spain and in the Mediterranean areas. Sailors would take these small, lively, and intelligent dogs with them on their voyages, using the dogs to trade for other items on their travels. In this way, the breed was spread along shipping routes and was considered to be a sign of distinction and wealth as only affluent traders were able to secure one of these powder-puff looking dogs.

As the dogs increased in popularity, more of the ladies and gentlemen of the various courts demanded smaller and smaller Bichon Frise dogs, leading breeders to strive for the size of Bichon Frise that is now common, rather than the larger original versions of the breed. The Bichon Frise dogs of royalty were pampered well; typically, they were groomed, perfumed, and carried almost everywhere, eating from their owner's fingers or from specially prepared foods.

As the actual structure of much of society changed in the 1800's and royalty no longer played as important of a role in setting style and fashion in many countries, the demand for the Bichon Frise as a status symbol declined. The dogs, however, due to their high level of intelligence and amazing ability to learn complex routines were very much sought after by circuses, traveling performers and other entertainers.



For many years, the Bichon Frise was popular as a circus dog and was used in carnivals and circuses all over Europe. In addition, the small little dog was very popular in France as a companion and housedog.

In 1933, just after the First World War, a group of Bichon Frise breeders in France met to determine a breed standard that would be used universally across the four lines of the Bichon Frise. The resulting standards were adopted by the Societe Centrale Canine of France and the combined name of Bichon Frise was adopted as the official breed name. In 1934, the breed was further recognized by the French Kennel Club.

The first Bichon Frise was brought to the United States in 1956 and the American Kennel Club officially recognized it as a breed in 1971 in the Miscellaneous Class. The following year, they were allowed into the AKC stud book and on April 4th 1973 the breed officially was recognized in the Non-sporting group of the AKC.

Currently, the Bichon Frise is considered to be one of the top fifty most popular dogs in the United States and holds similar distinctions in most other countries and areas of the world. The American Kennel Club ranks the Bichon Frise as the 26th most registered breed through their registry as of 2005.

The amazing versatility of the Bichon Frise, as well as its gentle and fun loving personality, continue to make it a popular dog for many different types of events as well as being a wonderful companion. Breeders strive today, as they have for centuries, to retain the intelligence and gentleness of the breed while improving on the lines through selective and careful breeding programs.

## **BREED STANDARDS FOR THE BICHON FRISE**

The Bichon Frise is a very well balanced and energetic dog that is lively as well as gentle and well behaved. Breed standards also include a cheerful temperament without any signs of aggression or timid behavior. The Bichon Frise should be curious and interested in his or her surroundings but also be friendly and eager to meet new people and pets, and get involved in activities.

The breed standards for the Bichon Frise may vary slightly depending on which registry or Kennel Club in which the dog is registered. Some Bichon Frise may be registered in several different Kennel Clubs or breed registries; that is acceptable and even desirable for many owners and breeders.

The most widely accepted breed standard used by the Canadian Kennel Club, Kennel Club of Great Britain, American Kennel Club and the Kennel Clubs of Australia and New Zealand include the following specifications.

## **HEAD**

- The expression should be intelligent, alert, and soft, with dark brown eyes and a highly inquisitive appearance.
- The eyes are round in shape and well set into the skull, looking straightforward. Almond shaped eyes or eyes that protrude are considered a serious fault.
- A halo or dark pigment around the eye is required, as is a black rim around the eye. Pigment in this area cannot be broken or brownish in color. The eyes themselves are very dark brown to black in color with no other colors acceptable.
- The ears are set high and towards the front of the skull, and should provide a soft frame for the face when the dog is alert. The ears hang down the sides of the head and when extended forward, the leather of the ears should reach about halfway down the muzzle.
- The skull is rounded at the top and the face has a noticeable stop between the forehead and the muzzle that further tends to accentuate the dark, sparkling eyes.
- The muzzle tapers from the eyes to the nose and should be approximately 3/5<sup>th</sup> of the total length of the head.
- The lips are tight and firm to the teeth and are always black. The nose is also black and noticeable against the white coat. The lower jaw is strong and well proportioned.
- The teeth meet in a scissors bite and are centered without an overbite or under bite. Teeth should be straight and well aligned in the mouth.

## **BODY**

- The neck is arched and moderately long for the size of the dog. It tapers slightly from the shoulders to the jaw and skull area. The neck flows into the shoulders and the chest to form an even line.
- The back or top line is level and straight with a slight arch over the loin area.

- The chest is well developed and deep, reaching to the level of the elbows on the front legs. There should be a free range of motion on the front quarters with the chest wide enough to give balance to the dog's appearance when viewed from the side or front.
- The rib cage is well sprung with a gentle rounded shape to the mid body section. The dog should appear athletic and not heavy or chunky through the body.
- The front legs are medium boned and very straight with the elbows being held close to the body. The feet are cat-like in appearance with an overall round shape and pads that are very compact and held together. The bottoms of the feet as well as the nails are black.
- The hind legs are muscular and strong with a well-bent stifle joint. The legs should be straightforward and parallel to the front legs when viewed from the front or back. As with the front feet, the pads are compact and are pointed directly forward.
- The tail of the Bichon Frise is carried curled over the back so the plume on the tail rests on the back of the dog. It is level with the backbone and should not droop or corkscrew. The tail, when extended, should reach halfway down the back to the shoulders.

## **MOVEMENT**

- The Bichon Frise should have a free and easy gait with lots of spring and energy in their step. The front and hind legs should show good, even drive and the top line or back should remain level when the dog is in motion.
- As the Bichon Frise moves faster at more accelerated gaits, the feet will tend to move towards the center of the dog's body but should never swing excessively either inwards or outwards.
- The feet should remain straightforward in all gaits and the head should also stay with its high carriage even at faster paces.

## **COAT**

- The coat of the Bichon Frise is one of its most distinguishing features and is critical in the show ring. Judges look for a dense, inner coat that is soft and fine in texture covered by a slightly coarse, curlier outer coat.

- The coat should have good natural volume and a texture similar to that of velvet. When the hair is touched it should bounce back and not stay flat against the body. Although smooth and somewhat soft to the touch, the coat still has substance and texture.
- For show purposes, the coat should stand off the body and have an appearance like a powder puff. Wiry, very silky or flat coats are considered serious faults.
- The Bichon Frise should be white in color, but variations of apricot, buff, or cream may be seen on the body or around the ears. If there are any areas of color other than white on the body, they can only be buff, cream, or apricot and may not be more than 10% of the overall coat.
- Puppies that have not developed their adult coat may have darker colorations and this is acceptable until the mature coat is fully grown in.
- The hair on the tail should be well plumed and blend with the hair on the back. The hair on the ears should likewise blend with the hair on the sides of the face to add a frame to the face.

## **SIZE**

- The Bichon Frise should range in size from 9 1/2 inches (24.1 cm) to 11 1/2 inches (29.2 cm) at the shoulder for either males or females, with no dogs being allowed into competition that are under 9 inches (23 cm) or over 12 inches (30 cm).
- Males are usually slightly taller and heavier than females, with the weight of the Bichon Frise ranging from 7 to 12 pounds or 3 to 5 kgs.

## **WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT A BICHON FRISE?**

The Bichon Frise is one of the best tempered and easiest to train dogs that, while being a small dog, are still hardy, robust, and really love being around children. The Bichon Frise has been bred for centuries to be a companion dog and this breed tends to take this job very seriously.

They do bond very closely with the family, but not in the jealous or difficult way that so many of the other small dog breeds tend to bond. The Bichon Frise is happiest when he or she is around people more than on his or her

own, but they can be ideal house dogs for working families provided they have lots of attention and interaction when the family is home for the day.

Since the Bichon Frise is a naturally intelligent dog, they are easier to train than many of the smaller breeds. Although they are independent, they are not stubborn and they do absolutely love to please their owners. Unlike some dogs, the Bichon Frise is just as happy to learn a new trick for a bit of praise and attention as they are for a treat or snack.

Many owners of Bichon Frise report these dogs have an uncanny instinct to be able to understand what the owner is wanting before they even have to give the command. In addition, these dogs are known to be natural entertainers, quickly figuring out what pleases the owner and incorporating this into their daily routines. It is not uncommon for a Bichon Frise to understand that the jangle of the keys means a ride in the car or that the opening of the cupboard means time for a treat.

The trainability of this breed also makes it an ideal family dog. They love to learn new tricks and routines and are often used in obedience or agility work - as well as for providing that extra bit of entertainment to amaze your friends and family with many new tricks. A Bichon Frise will listen well to children and love the attention that kids tend to lavish on them.

They are very active dogs and will enjoy romping through the yard, or just playing with the children in the house. The Bichon Frise is a small breed that doesn't enjoy the really rough and tumble activities, but they are amazingly athletic and hardy for their smaller stature. Even small children will have little difficulty in learning how to get along with a Bichon Frise.

The Bichon Frise is a very social breed of dog and is great for a household with lots of company and visitors. The breed can be a watchdog and will bark when people arrive, but they quickly settle down and make guests part of the family. Proper socialization as a puppy is important for the Bichon Frise as with any breed, but they tend to have far less aggression or shyness issues than other small breeds.

In addition to being very people friendly, the Bichon Frise is also very social with other dogs and non-canine pets. The Bichon Frise does well as a single dog in a household or can also be an excellent breed as a companion dog for almost any other breed. Since they are not dominant by nature, they may even be good with more possessive and dominant breeds. However, it will be important to supervise the interaction until you are sure it is safe to leave the dogs alone.

The Bichon Frise is usually a great companion for a house with a cat or other pet, provided the puppy is socialized with the other animals as early as possible. Even an older Bichon Frise can learn to get along with calm cats that are already familiar with dogs.

The Bichon Frise actually sheds very little and is often a good option for a person with allergies. As with any type of dog, it is important for allergy sufferers to spend some time with a Bichon Frise to see if they can tolerate the breed before making the decision to buy a puppy or dog.

Since the breed sheds little year round, it is also a good indoor dog as clean-up of hair is minimal. Many owners choose to have their Bichon Frise professionally groomed and clipped on a regular basis to even further reduce the grooming requirements for the dog.

Apartment living, city living, or even out in the country are all acceptable for a Bichon Frise. They do prefer to be inside rather than outside, especially in colder, wet weather or at night. The breed can tolerate being left outdoors in moderate temperatures during the day provided they are in a secured, fenced yard. While not a roaming or wandering breed, they are often so friendly they will follow people home, resulting in lost dogs and panicked families.

A Bichon Frise will self-exercise indoors, which means that they will find something to do to keep active even if they can't spend time outdoors in a yard. They do need regular exercise, such as going for a walk or spending time in the park.

Since they are a calm breed of dog that is not prone to being hyper or overly active, the Bichon Frise is a great companion dog for the elderly or people that have limited mobility. An excellent traveling companion, the Bichon Frise is great as a car dog and travels very well even on planes or trains once they have become familiar with the method of travel.

The most endearing personality trait of the Bichon Frise is its unconditional love for its owners. These dogs absolutely need to spend time with their family and are truly happy when they can just be with the people they know. They enjoy jumping up on the couch beside you, or snuggling onto your lap for a quiet evening of watching television or reading a book.

## 2 IS A BICHON FRISE RIGHT FOR YOU?



### **IS A BICHON FRISE RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?**

Every dog, just like every person or any other type of animal, has his or her own unique personality. It is impossible and incorrect to say that a Bichon Frise is right for every family and every possible living condition, so it is critical for people to take the time to look at all aspects of the dog as well as the family lifestyle to see if the two match and will work together.

Choosing a Bichon Frise because you like the looks of the breed, or you saw one and thought it was cute is often the way that a breed is selected, but this does a disservice to the dog and will result in problems for the owners as well.

Before deciding if the Bichon Frise is the best dog breed for you, stop and consider the following attributes of the breed as well as the challenges that owning a Bichon Frise may cause. Once you are able to understand what

owning a Bichon Frise will be like, only then will it be possible to make the right decision about owning the breed.

## **HIGHLY SOCIAL**

The Bichon Frise is a dog that needs human attention to thrive and reach his or her full potential as a companion dog. Families that are away more than they are home, or are too busy to include the dog in their plans or spend time with the dog on a regular, daily basis are not good matches for a Bichon Frise. Families where someone that will interact with the dog is home most of the time as well as families that can take the dog with them are excellent matches for the breed.

The Bichon Frise will also need to stay inside at night, as they prefer to be around people as opposed to being isolated. This doesn't mean that they need to sleep up on the bed, but they will definitely prefer being in the same room as a family member, rather than being isolated in a crate or kennel elsewhere in the house.

## **INTELLIGENT**

Since the Bichon Frise is so intelligent, it is easy to train; however he or she will also be able to pick up bad behaviors just as fast as they learn the good behaviors. They are also more prone to learning tricks and ways to get out of doing things they simply don't want to do by out-thinking their owner. In addition, the very intelligence of the dog makes them sometimes a bit stubborn to work with as they have their own particular way of doing things that they prefer. They do need a consistent trainer and owner that can work with this highly intelligent dog and provide mental challenges beyond just the basics.

## **ADAPTABLE**

Most owners would agree that adaptability really is the key trait of this small dog. They can adjust to limited time outside, but they can also thrive on lots of exercise and being outside with the family. The Bichon Frise can also do well in a small living space such as an apartment, provided they are given a moderate amount of daily exercise. They also tend to be forgiving if they have to skip a long walk due to bad weather or some other issue. Unlike some breeds that become highly active and disobedient under these conditions, the Bichon Frise seems to be able to take it all in stride.



## **WATCHDOGS, BUT NOT GOOD GUARD DOGS**

It is hard to imagine too many people that would take a small little furry powder puff as a serious guard dog. However, Bichon Frise do make excellent watchdogs. Unlike many of the smaller breeds including the terriers, the Bichon Frise is not typically a problem barker or a yappy dog provided they have enough socialization and exercise per day. The Bichon Frise will usually bark two or three times when someone or some animal approaches the house, but then they will calm down and be ready to play or get a bit of attention.

Those owners wanting a dog that will defend the property or actively work to keep strangers away should consider a different breed of dog than the Bichon Frise. They are simply too happy and full of merriment to be an effective guard dog.

## **QUICK TO LEARN**

Typically very quick to learn new tricks and routines, the Bichon Frise must be worked with from the time they are a puppy to really help develop their full potential. Early socialization and obedience training is a must to prevent their somewhat stubborn streak from becoming more challenging. The Bichon Frise really does want to please, which is why they are such a popular breed. The Bichon Frise is a good breed for first time dog owners, provided the owners stay consistent and work with a positive rewards training program or method. Clicker training is also very effective with the Bichon Frise and they quickly associate the clicker with a treat or reward.

The Bichon Frise, like many smaller breeds of dogs, can be somewhat challenging to house train. Crate training is recommended for the breed and with consistent use of a crate in house training, the process typically takes less than three weeks.

## **CHOOSING A MALE OR A FEMALE DOG**

Deciding if a male or female Bichon Frise will best match your family is a very personal decision that should be based on facts and information. As with any breed, the male and female Bichon Frise will have slightly different behaviors that are typical of either gender, but some will show these traits more and some will show them less.

Puppies often show the smallest differentiation between male and female behaviors and the behaviors do not become evident until the puppies reach the "teenage" years where hormones start to drive behavior.

Before going to select a Bichon Frise puppy or adult, take a considerable amount of time to decide if a male or female will be the best option. All Bichon Frise puppies and adults should be spayed or neutered unless the owner is planning on breeding the dog in a responsible fashion.

This means that any mixed breed Bichon Frise or purebred dogs that are family pets really should be spayed or neutered as soon as possible to prevent unwanted pregnancies and health risks. In addition, spaying and neutering will eliminate virtually all of the more problematic behaviors typically associated with both male and female mating behaviors.

## **MALES**

While not an aggressive or dominant breed, the intact male Bichon Frise will be the most dominant of either the female or the neutered male of the breed. Dominance and some aggression in males can be noted when a female in heat is present and there are other male dogs also in the house.

Occasionally, the male can also be aggressive with the female at this time although this is not as common as it may be in other breeds. Generally, the male Bichon Frise is a good companion dog either when intact or neutered, although intact males will need closer supervision to prevent them from getting out and running and potentially breeding females.

Breeding for males carries the risk of sexual transmitted diseases as well as possible injury when running, getting into fights with other dogs, and even being hurt by other dog owners trying to keep males away from their females. Males that are neutered tend to be calmer, experience less hormonally driven behaviors, and be less prone to cancers of the reproductive organs.

The male Bichon Frise is slightly larger and heavier than the female, but the height difference will be typically less than 1-11/2 inches or 2.5-3cm and 2 pounds or just under 1 kilogram. There are some males that may be slightly bigger and some that are slightly smaller, but generally, males and females are not physically much different.

Male dogs tend to be a bit more independent and stubborn than females and may also be slightly more protective of their territory. The male Bichon Frise is also a bit more playful and outgoing than the female in many cases. They will also be more likely to engage in "marking" type behaviors both in the house and outside in the yard area.

Marking is a very natural thing for males to do to stake out their territory and this behavior often becomes much less problematic if the male is neutered.

The male Bichon Frise, like any other breed of dog, will typically become sexually active and capable of mating faster than females. This means that owners must be prepared to either isolate the male from females or have him neutered earlier than the spaying process is completed for the females. Males will also start to roam and wander at an earlier age, especially if there are other female dogs in heat in the vicinity.

The male Bichon Frise may be particularly challenging to house train as they are far more difficult to monitor, as they don't just urinate when they have to, they also urinate to mark their territory as discussed above. Both males and females are known for being a housebreaking challenge; however, crate training can work well for house training with both males and females.

## **FEMALES**

The female Bichon Frise is slightly more delicate in appearance than the male and may be just a bit more outgoing when it comes to affection and wanting (or needing) to be with people all the time. The female Bichon Frise gets along well with neutered males and other females. Unless they are constantly supervised, they need to be leashed whenever outside of the house when they are in heat to prevent them from being bred.

Females that are not spayed will also exhibit highly sexualized behaviors and some changes in personality during the spring and fall breeding seasons.

During their estrus cycle, the female Bichon Frise will have a discharge from her vulva and will have some swelling of the area. She will also be friendlier and seem to need more attention and be a bit whiny or timid.

Some females may get possessive of their bedding, toys or food at this time, but with the Bichon Frise, this is relatively uncommon. She may also make many attempts to get out the door during this time, so carefully attaching a leash before letting her outside is critical to keeping her safe and under control.

As in the case of any hormonally driven behavior, spaying will completely and immediately eliminate these issues and will also prevent the female from becoming pregnant.

Spaying will also greatly reduce the risk of cancers of the reproductive system, including the mammary glands. Spayed females cannot go through false pregnancies nor do owners have to risk the female's health during pregnancy and delivery. Spaying a female before she has her first litter is the best possible option and is highly recommended by vets and reputable breeders.

The female Bichon Frise is often slightly more relaxed than the male, and they may also be a bit more affectionate and less likely to want to run and play as they mature. They may also be more sensitive to the owner's tone of voice and may seem to respond to the owner's moods more intensely than males. Females tend to be slightly easier to train and less likely to exhibit highly independent behaviors, or even the mild stubbornness sometimes seen in males.

## **SIMILARITIES**

Unlike many breeds, the Bichon Frise actually is more similar than dissimilar between males and females. Some breeds, typically large dogs, have a great deal of difference between the size and temperament of males and females, but the Bichon Frise is fairly uniform. Of course, every dog is individual and will have his or her own personality, but generally, a Bichon Frise is a happy, pleasant, loving dog that enjoys following commands, being the center of attention, and making everyone around happy.

Both males and females are people dogs and do best when they are constantly involved with the family, either in an activity, or just sitting in the same general area. Neither males nor females do well as kennel dogs or when simply left outdoors for most of the time. They both need to feel part of the family and also have a bit of a challenge and a job to do in keeping the family entertained and amused.

Both male and female Bichon Frise will need the same types of foods, bedding, toys and health check ups. They will need regular vaccinations as well as the flea and worming treatments, and heartworm medications if this is a problem in your area. Talking to a breeder or Bichon Frise owner can really help you in making the decision if a male or female Bichon Frise is best for your family.

# 3

## GETTING A BICHON FRISE



### **DECIDING ON A PUPPY OR ADULT BICHON FRISE**

Choosing between an adult and a puppy Bichon Frise is a big decision, but bringing home either adult or puppy can be a rewarding experience provided you are prepared for all the various aspects of raising a dog or puppy.

The Bichon Frise is no different than any other breed: there are positives and negatives to owning an adult that are similar to owning a puppy, plus there are also additional issues with owning a puppy that are not as problematic when choosing an adult Bichon Frise.

Making the decision on either an adult or puppy Bichon Frise requires the family to honestly answer several questions. These include questions such as:

- How much time do you have to devote to training and housetraining a puppy?
- What, if any, past experience do you have in raising and training a puppy and do you feel confident in taking on this task?
- Are you prepared to plan for socialization for the puppy and perhaps have them attend a puppy obedience class?
- How important is having the dog or puppy socialize with other animals, including cats or other pets in the house?
- Do you want to know exactly what the dog's personality will be when he or she is fully grown?
- How much time can you spend interacting with the dog or puppy on a daily basis?
- How much patience do you have in working with animals?

Honestly answering these questions, as well as considering the pros and cons to choosing either a puppy or an adult dog, will help with this most challenging decision and ensure the age of Bichon Frise you choose will work best for your family and the dog.

## **THE BENEFITS OF A BICHON FRISE PUPPY**

It is impossible not to be immediately captivated by a cute little ball of fluff on four legs. The Bichon Frise puppy is absolutely adorable and this has led to both positives and negatives for the breed. The positive is that they are very adorable puppies that are typically well behaved and well mannered with very little training. The drawback is that people tend to buy or obtain these puppies in the emotion of the moment, without giving a thought to the difficulties and challenges of a puppy.

The biggest benefit to starting off with a Bichon Frise puppy is that you can provide socialization and training that is exactly what you would like. Since many Bichon Frise puppies that are not properly socialized have behavioral problems, providing this necessary component to training is essential both now and in the future.

This allows owners to socialize the puppy with cats, other dogs, kids, people, and even in new environments and places. The more careful and controlled socialization a puppy has, the better adjusted and calmer he or she will be as an adult dog, even in new and very unusual situations and environments.

Getting a puppy also allows the puppy to develop a strong bond with the owner right from the start. Puppies, regardless of the breed, tend to have fewer behavioral problems with fewer transitions between homes. Puppies that are left with the mother and litter until at least eight weeks and then moved directly to their new home are less prone to destructive behaviors, anxiety problems, and other behavioral issues.

Buying a Bichon Frise puppy from a reputable breeder is the absolute best option. Since the Bichon Frise breed is so popular, there are many backyard breeders and puppy mills that are producing unhealthy, atypical puppies that may have serious health problems as well as temperament issues. Spending a bit more to buy from a reputable breeder will provide a health guarantee as well as a support system for you and your new puppy.

## **DIFFICULTIES WITH A BICHON FRISE PUPPY**

Although watching the Bichon Frise puppy play with its littermates and interact with the breeder and owner is a good indicator of the puppy's temperament, it is not a guarantee of exactly how the personality will develop as the puppy ages.

Sometimes puppies will become more aggressive or more timid based on both their inherited temperaments as well as their environment and handling. Choosing a puppy always involves a bit of a gamble on what their final personality or temperament will be.

Housetraining a Bichon Frise puppy is often a challenge, regardless if the puppy is a male or female. Most small dogs are more difficult to housebreak than large breeds for several reasons, including their small size, lack of bladder and bowel control, and their ability to slip undetected behind the furniture and do their business without the owner even being aware the dog has gone to the bathroom.

Housetraining the Bichon Frise puppy requires consistency and time to be able to work with the puppy to ensure they understand that they need to go outside or in a designated area.

Puppies, overall, need special attention as they develop. Owners must follow up on additional vaccinations if they are not completed when the puppies are

brought home. There are greater risks for disease and health related concerns in puppies, especially in households with other dog or where there are a lot of other dogs in the vicinity of the puppy.

It takes a lot of patience and understanding to raise a puppy and allow him or her to develop into a well-adjusted Bichon Frise. They need positive reward and reinforcement training and should never be trained on punishment based systems.

## **BENEFITS OF AN ADULT BICHON FRISE**

Choosing an adult Bichon Frise from a rescue or shelter has its benefits, especially if the new owner or family wants a dog that is already trained, fully developed, and has gone through all the chewing, digging, whining, and messing in the house stages that puppies go through.

An adult Bichon Frise is typically able to make the adjustment to a new house in a few days or a week or two. If they have been properly socialized as puppies, they can adjust to being with other dogs or even with cats and other pets with just a few days of supervised interactions. Adult Bichon Frise from shelters or rescues are usually fostered out or monitored by the shelter or rescue staff to determine what type of household they would be best suited to.

An adult Bichon Frise is usually trained in the basic commands, which means that owners that want to still work on advanced training and tricks can build on the dog's current knowledge. Even owners that have never trained a dog can try out a few tricks and simple routines with an already well-trained adult Bichon Frise. In addition to just tricks and routines, the adult Bichon Frise will be already housetrained, which means that owners don't necessarily have to go through the whole housetraining ordeal.

Adult dogs will also have a fully developed personality that will typically not change unless they are traumatized or otherwise hurt. With an adult Bichon Frise, you can see if the dog is a cuddler, or if it likes a bit more independence. You can also usually spend a bit of time one on one with the dog to see if he or she is a good match for you before making the decision to bring the dog into your home.



## **THE PROBLEMS WITH AN ADULT BICHON FRISE**

Choosing an adult Bichon Frise is not without its problems. There is some time that is needed for the dog to adjust to your house and during that time there may be lapses in housetraining and messes to deal with until the dog settles in. In addition, some older Bichon Frise may have trouble adjusting to children and other pets in the house, so be sure to ask at the rescue or shelter or from the previous owner if there were any issues with kids and pets.

Since you don't have the detailed information on how the dog was trained and exactly what commands were used, there may be some retraining and learning of new commands. A professional dog trainer or attending an adult dog obedience class can help both the dog and the owner become familiar with each other in a very controlled learning environment. Be sure to check out the trainer and ask about the methods used to ensure you find someone that matches your training style and comfort level with working with the dog.

Remember that an adult dog will still need lots of attention and time to play and just enjoy being in the new family. Spending time with the dog and helping him or her adjust to your home will help with the bonding process, as well as reinforce that you are the new family.

## **WHERE TO BUY A BICHON FRISE**

Since the Bichon Frise has been a highly popular dog since about the 1970's in North American, Australia and across Europe, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Bichon Frise puppies and dogs as well as an increase in the number of less than reputable breeders.

While some backyard or private "one dog breeders" do lots of research and carefully select a mate for their dog, most simply look for any registered Bichon Frise to produce a litter of puppies.

Choosing the right breeder is critical to being happy with your puppy and getting a quality dog both in temperament and health. There are also rescues that are ideal for finding an adult Bichon Frise and many operate only to re-home the Bichon Frise breed, ensuring that the rescue understands the unique needs of the Bichon Frise.

## RESCUE SHELTERS

In most areas, the Bichon Frise rescue shelters are run by volunteers and managed through donations and grants. Bichon Frise rescues are typically found in many major centers and cater to Bichon Frise or Bichon Frise mixed breed dogs that have been abandoned, found lost or running free, or turned over to the shelter because the owners could no longer care for the dogs for some reason.

Shelters care for the Bichon Frise dogs, ensure that they are vet checked and healthy, provide spaying and neutering, and keep the dogs until a good match for a home is found. Almost all rescue shelters are non-kill facilities, which mean that the dogs will continue to live at the shelter or at a foster home placement for the rest of their lives if a home is not found.

Rescue shelters typically only handle adult dogs, although occasionally a younger puppies or even litters may be brought in. If you are interested in getting a mature, trained Bichon Frise from a shelter, the first step is to fill out an application and be approved for adoption. At that time, the shelter will place your application in an active file and watch for a dog that comes into the rescue that will meet your needs.

When picking up a Bichon Frise from a shelter, there are a few questions you should ask before agreeing to take the dog home. Although most rescues will provide this information in the adoption package, it is a great idea to ask to verify all answers if you are at all unsure. Before choosing a dog, be sure to check the following:

- Ask for the current vaccination and health records of the Bichon Frise, if available. Often when owners surrender their dog, this information is provided to the shelter when the dog is admitted.
- Find out if there have been any problems with behaviors, such as messing in the foster house or not accepting other pets, dogs or having problems in being around children if you have a family.
- Ask about the policy of the rescue for returning the dog should the adoption not work or the dog not settle into the home. Some Bichon Frise rescues provide a breeder/volunteer that will come to the house to check on any problems or concerns and help families work with the breed.
- Talk to the shelter staff or volunteers about any health conditions or behavioral issues that they feel are important for a new Bichon Frise owner to be aware of.

- Ask to spend some time with the dog at the shelter. You may be able to have time in a private room or in a secure fenced area to see if the dog responds to you and if it is a good match.
- Look for any possible health issues that may have been missed. Pay particular attention to the eyes and skin to ensure there are no signs of any health problems that may not have been treated, especially if the dog is just new into the rescue and has not been fostered out with a family.

Shelter dogs will often have a very incomplete medical history. Since a vet has typically checked the dogs when they came into the shelter, ask to speak directly to the vet or have your own vet check out the dog before you decide on the adoption.

Since the shelter may not have the dog that matches your lifestyle and requirements, you may have to be patient and wait for several months for the right Bichon Frise to be located. Some shelters will network with other shelters to get dogs re-homed faster, but this is not always the case.

## **PET STORES**

Most puppies, Bichon Frise included, that are found in pet stores come directly from puppy mills. These are horrible, mass breeding farms where dogs are irresponsibly bred and the goal is just to produce as many puppies as possible for the profit of the deplorable individuals that run these puppy farms. In most areas, puppy mills or puppy farms are illegal and are actively investigated by the SPCA and other law enforcement agencies.

Reputable Bichon Frise breeders do not sell their puppies through pet stores. While the Bichon Frise sold in pet stores are litter registered, most cannot be registered due to disqualifications that unsuspecting buyers may not even be aware exist. Many Bichon Frise sold through pet stores have the incorrect coat colorations or too much color other than white on their body to ever be shown or used for breeding.

In addition, Bichon Frise puppies sold through pet stores have often been removed from the mother and littermates too early, and have been exposed to disease and dirty conditions, and have been traumatized and poorly socialized through their experience in the pet store and in the horrible conditions in the puppy mill. Usually these puppies grow up to be poorly adjusted adult dogs that may have trouble with separation anxieties, poor health and aggression and fear.

Bichon Frise puppies from pet stores are usually almost as costly as puppies from reputable breeders. If you want a purebred Bichon Frise puppy or dog, it is far better to go through a well-known breeder than to take your chances on a puppy from a pet store that may not be show quality or may be seriously at risk for health conditions as it ages.

## **BREEDERS**

Breeders that are honestly working to produce high quality, healthy and happy puppies are the best possible option for buying a Bichon Frise puppy. Many smaller breeders provide in-house socialization prior to the puppy ever leaving their kennel, which means that the transition between the puppy's birth home and their house will be as smooth as possible.

Breeders will also be a wonderful source of information and suggestions for everything from feeding your Bichon Frise to finding a good groomer in your area that has worked with the breed.

Breeders should be knowledgeable on the breed and should be able to answer any questions that you may have. The breeder may have more than one breed in their kennel but kennels with multiple breeds may be smaller versions of puppy mills with the owners more interested in the money earned from breeding than the actual health, appearance and temperament of the puppies they are producing.

Do some research on the breeder and find out about the kennel. If you want to show or breed your puppy when it gets older, it will be important to invest in championship lines, which will mean looking at kennels that have show dogs with some experience in the ring.

Buying from championship lines does not guarantee a champion puppy, but it does increase the chances of the puppy to be close to the breed standards or ideals. Be aware that the more championship lines that are in the puppy's heritage or lineage the more expensive the puppy will be to purchase.

Also keep in mind most reputable breeders that are actively showing the dogs from their kennel will not have to advertise the puppies for sale. As a matter of fact, many Bichon Frise breeders have lengthy waiting lists for owner wanting to buy a puppy from a particular line cross. If necessary, be prepared to put your name on a list and wait until the right puppy comes along.

## **FINDING A GOOD BICHON FRISE BREEDER**

Finding a Bichon Frise breeder is not too difficult, a simple search on the internet or checking ads in the local paper will often produce a list of breeders all eager to sell "future champion" Bichon Frise puppies. Unfortunately, many of these breeders are not true breeders, they are people that have bred their Bichon Frise and are now trying to sell a litter of puppies.

A reputable Bichon Frise breeder does more than just breed dogs for sale. He or she is active in trying to produce the highest quality Bichon Frise, which means considering health issues, temperament, lineage and even possible problems or benefits to particular crosses.

A reputable breeder will have both the male and female dogs vet checked before breeding and will care for the female during her pregnancy to ensure that the puppies have the best possible start. Often, the best way to find a reputable breeder is to go to dog shows or breed association meetings and spend some time with the people in the groups, getting to know who is genuinely interested in the breed and who may be there for other reasons.

### **WHY GET A PUPPY FROM A BICHON FRISE BREEDER?**

Many people mistakenly believe that buying a puppy from a breeder is an unnecessary expense. In reality, buying a higher cost puppy from a breeder may actually be an overall cost saving strategy in the long run.

The following are reasons to buy a Bichon Frise only from a reputable Bichon Frise breeder:

- A reputable breeder will be associated with or a member of a Kennel Club or Bichon Frise Club and will be required to adhere to various ethical and humane guidelines for the care, treatment and breeding of their dogs.
- Breeders will health check the mother (dam) and father (sire) to ensure that there are no known genetic or hereditary conditions and will only use healthy, mature dogs in breeding programs.
- Breeders will sell puppies as either pet or show quality, which means that if you purchase a show quality puppy the breeder is guaranteeing that the puppy meets the basic breed standards and can be shown in the Kennel Club in the area.

- Registration assistance with the puppy being litter registered and the breeder assisting the new owner with the transfer of registration with the Kennel Club or association.
- Information, support, and assistance with issues related to the breed or the raising of the puppy. Many breeders encourage new owner to continue to have contact with the kennel and provide assistance for the owner in getting the dog in shows or events.
- Someone to turn to should you have questions or concerns about the puppy. Unlike a backyard breeder, the reputable kennel owner will be there for years to come.

The Bichon Frise breeder is an invaluable source of information, as well as ideas about working with a Bichon Frise puppy and adult dog. Since they have extensive experience with the breed, they may even have a better understanding of behavioral issues that a trainer or animal behavioralist in some situations.

### **WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK A BICHON FRISE BREEDER?**

When researching breeders and kennels for a Bichon Frise puppy, it is important to ask questions and find out information about the breed. The following questions are very specific to issues and concerns that a prospective Bichon Frise owner should ask a breeder:

- What types of championships or events have Bichon Frise dogs from the kennel won in the past?
- Is the breeder a member of the Kennel Club, Bichon Frise Association, or other registry or association?
- Ask for a tour of the kennels. Do they look clean, well ventilated, and do they smell fresh? Is there fresh water in the kennels for the dogs, do they have access to a large run or fenced area? Do the dogs look content?
- Does the breeder produce a pedigree or other paperwork to clearly identify the dogs in the puppy's line?
- What type of bill of sale and warranty does the breeder offer? Is there a mandatory spay or neuter clause in the agreement?
- How many puppies per year does the kennel sell or produce and how often are the females bred?

Finding answers to these questions can help you determine if the breeder is really working for the betterment of the breed. Most Bichon Frise kennels are going to be highly reputable, especially if they are actively involved in showing the dogs or using them in competitions.

If you have any concerns, do some more research and maybe check out few other kennels. With the Bichon Frise being such a popular breed, there is usually a good selection of high quality kennels available in most areas.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED ABOUT?**

As a prospective puppy owner buying from a kennel or breeder, there are several signs or comments that should raise a warning flag about doing business with the kennel or breeder. The following are telltale signs that the breeder may not be as reputable as he or she is trying to sound:

- Indications that the kennel has recently changed names. Typically kennel owners never change their name; it is, after all, their reputation. Kennels that are re-named may have had problems in the past or been banned from associations due to unethical practices.
- Owners of kennels that don't allow you to go into the kennel but always bring just one puppy out to you. Perhaps there is a good reason the kennel cannot be accessed, but the owner should explain the reason to you and set an alternate time or date for you to take a tour.
- Puppies that seem despondent, thin, or unhealthy or dogs in the kennel that appear stressed, nervous, or afraid of the owner or kennel staff.
- Kennels which appear dirty, damaged or not clean and fresh. Poor ventilation is a leading problem of respiratory problems in puppies so watch for foul smelling air or moldy smells or areas in the kennels.
- Breeders that seem unwilling or unable to produce the litter registration papers. This may be a delay in processing but it may also mean that the litter cannot be registered.
- Breeders that have no affiliation with the major Kennel Clubs of Bichon Frise Associations in the area and seem to be unknown by other breeders.
- Breeders that don't ask any questions of you. A concerned breeder will only sell to a responsible buyer, so if the breeder doesn't ask questions

or seem to be concerned about the puppy after it leaves his or her hands, he or she is not a responsible dog breeder.

In addition, call your local Bichon Frise Association or Kennel Club or check online to ensure they are a member in good standing as they have indicated. Talking to other Bichon Frise owners is also a good way to find out tips and techniques for selecting the best possible kennel to buy your Bichon Frise puppy from.

## **HOW MUCH WILL A BICHON FRISE COST?**

As mentioned earlier, there is a great difference between a pet quality purebred Bichon Frise and a championship lineage Bichon Frise that is going to be used in competition and show as well as breeding programs. In most areas the greater the number of kennels selling the Bichon Frise breed the lower the cost will be, but this is only a very general statement.

Most pet quality Bichon Frise puppies in the United States and Canada will range in price from \$250.00 through to \$600.00. Show quality Bichon Frise with championship lines may range in price from \$750.00 through to several thousand dollars, depending on the lines and breeding that has gone into producing the puppy.

In addition to just the cost of the puppy, there may also be shipping charges added to the price if the puppy needs to be transported to the new owner. Many reputable breeders won't ship the puppy without the owner taking possession at the kennel, thereby assuring that the puppy will be well cared for during the transport.

In the United Kingdom, it is not uncommon for Bichon Frise puppies that are pet and show quality to range in price from £350 to £800, depending on the area and lineage of the puppies. In other areas of Europe, prices are comparable to that of the United Kingdom.

Bichon Frise is also a popular breed of companion dog in Australia and New Zealand. Typically, the cost of a Bichon Frise puppy in these areas will be between \$450 and \$2000 AUD, depending on the quality and lineage of the puppy. Most purebred Bichon Frise puppies in Australia and New Zealand will average \$500 AUD.

The cost of a Bichon Frise puppy has to be weighed carefully with the variations in health assurances, support from the breeder as well as buy what the owner wants to do with the puppy. If the owners want to show and get involved in associations and breed the dogs, it is likely a better decision



to choose the best possible line for show and breeding to get a kennel started.

If the family is looking for a loving family pet that will be spayed or neutered, a pet quality Bichon Frise that is a little or a lot less expensive may be idea and provide a wonderful family pet.

Typically, a rescue will offer mature, adult Bichon Frise dogs for between \$150.00 and \$200.00 in North America. This amount includes spaying and neutering, all vaccinations, flea treatment and worming before the pet leaves the rescue. In the UK, most rescues will ask for a re-homing donation of under £150 unless the dog has had to have extensive treatments or rehabilitation, which may require a slightly higher donation to the rescue to cover the additional costs.

## **CHOOSING A HEALTHY BICHON FRISE**

Whether choosing an adult or puppy Bichon Frise, it is always important to get the healthiest possible dog or puppy. Not only is it very costly to treat a sick puppy or dog, but there are also problems with bonding and adjustment for dogs that are not well, plus there is the additional stress on the family that just wants their new little dog to be able to come home and be loved.

Avoiding the impulse to choose the smallest, the saddest or the quietest puppy is often challenging but these are often signs of either genetic or health conditions that are preventing the puppy or dog from behaving as the other dogs or puppies around it are.

Knowing what to look for to spot a healthy Bichon Frise puppy or dog is important when you actually go out to start looking at prospective dogs for the family.

### **HEALTHY BICHON FRISE PUPPIES**

Healthy Bichon Frise puppies are little, active balls of white fluffy hair that just naturally seem happy, curious and welcoming. To choose the healthiest and most even-tempered puppy, look for the following:

- The puppy should be alert and aware of changes in the environment. While they may be somewhat hesitant of new people, they should be willing to come over or let you approach after you have been in the area for a few minutes.

- The puppies should be in a clean, well-ventilated area. Although there may be some waste material in the kennel area, there should be no old material left in the kennel area.
- The kennel where the puppies are kept should be supplied with fresh, clean water at all times. The dishes should be suitably sized so the puppies can easily access the water.
- The breeder should not be willing to let the puppies go before eight weeks of age at the very minimum. Some breeder may require the puppies stay with the mother until ten or twelve weeks for proper socialization and adjustment.
- The puppies should be active and easily moving around. They may stumble and fall when traveling in new areas, but they should be fairly steady on their feet by eight weeks of age. Watch for any signs of seizures or lack of coordination that may indicate neurological problems.
- The puppies should not appear afraid of the owners, other dogs or littermates. The most timid puppy will usually grow up to be a timid dog unless highly socialized and supported in his or her training. The most aggressive puppy is likely to be the more dominant dog and may be more stubborn and headstrong.
- The puppies should be clean with no food debris or waste material on their coats. When changing to solid foods, the puppies may have some digestive disorders that can cause diarrhea, but this should only last for a very short period of time.
- The puppy's eyes should be clear and bright without any signs of pus or cloudiness. There should not be any noticeable tearing or any staining of the hair around the eyes from moisture or tearing.
- The breath should be sweet smelling puppy breath. Any foul smelling breath can be a sign of possible digestive problems or more serious health conditions.
- The nose should be free from any signs of mucous or discharge. Sneezing and coughing are often signs of upper respiratory problems and infections that can be very problematic.
- The puppies should be free from fleas, which can be most easily spotted as flea dirt on the white coats of the Bichon Frise. Part the hair along the back and look for any signs of fleas, flea dirt or skin problems.

- A pot-bellied appearance may indicate a significant roundworm infection. Ask the breeder if the dam and puppies have been wormed.

In addition, the coat should be relatively soft to the touch but not flat or overly silky and fine. The skin should be healthy looking without dry, flaky areas or areas where the puppy has been scratching or licking.

## **CHOOSING A HEALTHY ADULT BICHON FRISE**

A healthy adult Bichon Frise will have many of the same characteristics as a healthy puppy. Adult dogs are often more easy to asses for health conditions because some of the issues will be much more obvious in adult dogs than in puppies. They key points to look for in selecting a healthy Bichon Frise include:

- Eyes free from any signs of cataracts that are often noted as milky or white color in the center of the eye.
- The ears should be free from any significant waxy build up or any foul smell. The breed can be prone to ear infections and problems, so also check for hearing. Jangling a set of keys or making a unique sound should cause the dog to turn his or her head to look.
- Check the skin carefully for any signs of lesions, tumors, dry or hot spots or other rashes or sores. Any of these conditions can indicate more significant health issues.
- Watch the dog walk and look for any signs of lameness or favoring of the legs, especially the front legs. The Bichon Frise is prone to problems with the kneecaps that can become worse as the dog ages.
- Look for a dog that is a healthy weight, not overweight or too light for his or her size.
- Check for any discharge from the genital area, especially in intact males and females. This can be a sign of various infections or disease of the reproductive tracts.
- Check the teeth carefully as this breed can sometimes have problems with retaining teeth as they age. Ask about the diet the dog has been on and if there are problems with switching the dog to a different diet such as all kibble.
- Ask about any signs of seizures of movement or neurological problems with the dog that may indicate epilepsy.

- Watch how the dog reacts to new people. Does it seem scared or is it friendly? How does it interact with the owner? Does it seem well behaved and well mannered?

Finally, be sure to get a copy of the vaccination record and vet record for the adult Bichon Frise. If possible, get the vet's name and give them a call before deciding on the dog. Talk to the owner and ask for any information they can provide on the health and temperament of the Bichon Frise.

## **REGISTRIES, REFERRALS AND CONTRACTS**

There are specific groups, associations and organizations that are responsible for keeping records of purebred dogs of particular breeds that are registered with the organization within each country. For most breeds, including the Bichon Frise, the major Kennel Clubs that recognize the breed and contain registries are:

- AKC – American Kennel Club
- CKC – Canadian Kennel Club
- UKC – United Kennel Club
- KCGB - Kennel Club of Great Britain
- NZKC – New Zealand Kennel Club
- ANKC- Australian National Kennel Club

In addition, there are various specialized associations and organizations that also have breed standards, may or may not provide registry and may or may not maintain stud books for breeding purposes. Some of these groups include:

- FCI - Federation Cynologique Internationale
- BFCA – Bichon Frise Club of America
- NKC - National Kennel Club
- APRI – American Pet Registry Inc
- ACR – American Canine Registry

Dogs that are registered in the top group of Kennel Clubs can compete in that groups shows and events however dogs in the bottom group may not be eligible until they are registered. The FCI actually does not keep a specific registry of individual dogs rather it recognizes various breeds and provides breed standards that are used by many other the other registries, groups and organizations.

## **CONTRACTS**

A written contract is just as important when buying a Bichon Frise as it is when purchasing a car. The contract is the bill of sale and will be used to prove ownership, transfer registry and outline what you will do with the dog and what you may not be able to do with the puppy, even after you take it home. Understanding the contract and asking questions before agreeing to the sale, placing a deposit or signing the contract is absolutely important. Most contracts will include the following:

### **BILL OF SALE**

This will outline the breeder, kennel name that bred the puppy and the legal transfer (sale) of the puppy from the kennel to you. The bill of sale should indicate that the puppy is in good health, has all of her vaccinations up to date, and is guaranteed to be eligible for registry. There may also be a time limit of 48 hours or more when the new owner or purchaser can return the puppy should it be unhealthy or found it to be misrepresented in any way.

### **HEALTH GUARANTEE**

This may be a separate document or may be part of the bill of sale, depending on the area and the seller's paperwork. The health guarantee is in effect throughout the life of the puppy and includes genetic conditions that may not be evident at the time of purchase. This guarantee will be invalid if the owner does not maintain vaccinations or neglects or fails to treat the puppy or dog if needed.

### **REGISTRATION APPLICATION**

This is a very important document that allows the new owner to register the puppy as their own. The breeder will have all the information about the puppy filled in and will have the document signed and ready to go with the puppy. If this paperwork is not available, you may wish to wait until it is.

### **PEDIGREE**

This may be a hand written or computer generated chart or outline showing the lineage or heritage of the puppy as far back as possible.

Breeders have the option to add any additional information or requirements to the basic contract and many will choose to include:

### **BREEDING LIMITATIONS OR SPAY AND NEUTER CLAUSES**

The breeder will either stipulate that the puppy must be spayed or neutered by a certain age or that they can only be bred upon approval and consent of the breeder. This will be added to the registry information and puppy owners would not be allowed to register any puppies that their puppy may have when it matures. Typically failing to spay or neuter or breeding the dog and trying to register a litter will invalidate the sales contract and the original breeder will have the right to claim the dog at that time.

### **HEALTH NOTIFICATION**

Most reputable breeders will require that the puppy owner notify them if the puppy becomes ill, sick or develops a genetic condition at any time in his or her life. This allows breeders to carefully monitor crosses and prevent recessive genetic problems from going unnoticed.

### **SHOWING DOGS**

Some contracts that allow the puppy to breed when they are mature will also require that the owner agree to show the dog so many times per year in certain organization events or competitions. Be very clear on this issue if this clause is in the contract.

### **REHOMING DOGS**

Most reputable breeders will require that the puppy be given back to them should the original owner be unable to care for the puppy or dog at any time in his or her life. This allows the breeder to know that his or her dogs won't end up mistreated by someone else or living in a rescue or shelter waiting to be re-homed.

In the excitement of getting your new Bichon Frise puppy, don't forget to take the time to read through the contract and ask any questions you may have. If you have been to the breeders and filled out an application, you may have been provided a copy of the contract and sample paperwork in advance. Be sure to ask questions if you are not clear on any terms or conditions and work with the breeder to make the paperwork simple and easy for both parties.

# 4

## **BRINGING YOUR BICHON FRISE HOME**



### **BRINGING HOME A NEW BICHON FRISE PUPPY**

It is hard to imagine a more exciting day than finally having the chance to bring home your new Bichon Frise puppy. Usually, this is a day that the whole family looks forward to, including the kids, making it for a potentially challenging day as well.

New owners need to keep in mind that while it will be the start of a beautiful new relationship between the owner and the puppy, for the puppy it is a challenging and frightening time as they leave their mother, brothers and sisters, and the only home they have ever known.

It is always important to decide in advance how the puppy will be transported home. Remember, the puppy will not be housetrained or will have likely never been in a car, much less in a car with a whole group of new people. You may wish to consider having a crate for the new puppy to provide the safest possible ride home.

Although it might be tempting to allow the Bichon Frise puppy to ride in your lap or cuddled in your arms on the way home, this provides little protection should the car come to a sudden stop or if an accident of even a minor kind were to happen. A Bichon Frise puppy is very small and rather delicate, so even a slip from the car seat to the floorboards is a long drop for such a small animal.

After the ride home, it is always the best possible idea to have all the supplies that you will need to make the puppy feel safe and welcome in his or her new home. Getting all the supplies together should be done in advance and they should be washed, disinfected and ready to play with, sleep on and eat out of when the puppy arrives.

## **SUPPLIES**

One of the most important of the basic supplies is puppy food. Bichon Frise puppies will be fed a particular food at the breeders and it is very important to stick to this kind of food until you have the chance to gradually switch over to a personal preference for the puppy.

Many breeders will provide a starter pack or gift basket that includes information on the types of feed the puppy was on as well as the breeder's recommendation for food. In addition, most breeders provide a couple of day's food supply so that the new owners have time to get to a pet store and purchase the correct food.

In addition to food, the new Bichon Frise puppy will also need:

- A correctly sized food and water dish with a non-skid bottom and designed to be turn-over proof.  
Remember that a Bichon Frise puppy is not very tall, so a high edged water or food dish will not work for the puppy and can lead to the puppy not eating and drinking the correct amounts of food and water.
- Appropriately sized solid rubber chew toys in various shapes and sizes.  
It is amazing how strong a Bichon Frise puppy can be, so don't opt for less expensive or cheap chew toys or toys for kids. Children's toys also have many parts and limbs that can be easy chewed off and pose choking hazards.



- Grooming supplies for the puppy.  
Usually, a Bichon Frise puppy will need a small sized pin brush, comb and a soft bristle brush for the first few months, then will need additional grooming supplies especially if you are going to clip or trim them at home yourself. If you plan to go to a groomer, you may not need additional supplies. In addition, you will need toe nail clippers for dogs and a good pair of blunt ended scissors for trimming mats and tangles.
- A crate or wire cage for housetraining and for sleeping.  
A Bichon Frise is not a large dog so the crate will typically be a small to medium size depending on the manufacturer. The breeder can show you crates that are ideal for both puppies and adult dogs.
- Washable, soft and durable bedding for inside the crate or the dog's sleeping area.  
Avoid using human bedding as it is not as well stitched and made as the more durable dog beds and dog blankets.
- An adjustable leash and collar or harness, depending on which you prefer to use.  
This is particularly important if you don't have a secure, fenced yard to let the puppy out to exercise and go to the bathroom. If you don't have a yard you will likely need to take the puppy out on the leash until they are trained to stay at your side.
- A tag.  
To help make identification easy should the Bichon Frise puppy become separated from the family a small, engraved tag for the collar is very important. Most vets will automatically scan for a microchip but if the puppy is at a private individual's home, they will have no ability to use the microchip for identification.
- Baby gates.  
Baby gates with very tiny openings or mesh are important if you have any stairs in the house. A tiny Bichon Frise puppy can easily be injured trying to follow the family up or down stairs. Baby gates can also be used to confine the dog to areas of the house or restrict access to other areas.
- Disinfectant and cleaners.  
These will help eliminate the odor of any areas where the puppy may mess or have an accident in the house. They will happen, so being prepared will help make clean up a breeze. Use a cleaner that actually removes or neutralizes the odor rather than just mask it.

- A spray on chew prevention product. This may be a great idea at least when the puppy is still learning what is his or hers to play with and what is not. These products are sold in pet stores and are typically safe on any type of furniture, but always test first. Bichon Frise are not usually problem chewers so you may not require this unless it becomes a problem.

## **SAFETY**

Making your home puppy-proof and puppy safe is critical. This will not only protect your new Bichon Frise puppy from getting into harmful things in the house, but it will also protect your furniture, clothes, and other possessions. Remember that puppies are naturally going to use their mouth and chew as they explore their new environment, so keep this in mind when safety proofing the rooms the puppy will have access to.

When checking a house for potential hazards for a Bichon Frise puppy, it is important to actually get down on the floor and look at what the puppy will see. Since the breed is so small, this means lying down on the floor and seeing what you can find that looking interesting. Some things to watch out for and remove or put up high include:

- **Any type of houseplant**  
Many houseplants including pothos, ivy, dieffenbachia, and even Christmas cactus and poinsettias are highly toxic and can make a puppy extremely ill or even be fatal if ingested.
- **Any and all pull cords on blinds or curtains**  
These can become wrapped around the puppy's neck and strangle the puppy or seriously damage the throat and windpipe.
- **Strings, threads or tassels**  
These may be a lot of fun to play with, but they can also ball up in the mouth and throat and pose a serious choking hazard.
- **Any and all electrical cords**  
Puppies, even small Bichon Frise puppies, can easily chew through an electrical cord and be fatally electrocuted. Cords that are not plugged in pose the risk of having the puppy pull on them and pull something over onto the puppy, causing serious injury.
- **Anything that you feel is beyond replacement**  
This means favorite rugs, knickknacks, pillows or other items that you feel very strongly about. Once the puppy is completely housetrained and obedience trained, these items can be replaced.

- **Anything that is easy to chew, destroy or break**  
Puppies may not try to destroy your things but they still don't understand the difference between what they can play with and what they can't.

## **TRANSITION**

The transition is the actual physical move from the breeder's kennel and the puppy's home, to its new home with you and your family. This is going to be traumatic no matter how prepared you are as a family. It is critical to remember that the Bichon Frise puppy will feel very small and alone at this time, so giving the puppy quiet time to see his or her new surrounding, having a crate or den area for the puppy to make his or her own comfort area, as well as having some treats and play things for the puppy will really help.

In addition, it is important to not overwhelm the tiny puppy with attention, affection, and too much human contact. Work with your children to help them understand that the puppy needs to sleep and relax and become comfortable in its new house. Keep any other pets including dogs, cats and other pets away from the puppy at this time until he or she is feeling more settled in their new environment.

A hot water bottle wrapped in a thick towel, an alarm clock that ticks wrapped in a blanket, or even a puppy safe stuffed toy can be a comfort to the puppy and make him or her feel less lonely their first few nights. An old t-shirt that you have worn placed in the puppy's bed area will also help him or her get used to your scent and be comfortable.

## **ATTITUDE**

Having the right attitude when bringing home your Bichon Frise puppy will help set the tone for the whole family. Be sure to have routines, schedules, and tasks for each of the family to allow them to feel that they are contributing to the new puppy's life in the home.

In addition, set down rules about when, where and with who the puppy will play and interact. Often, kids absolutely adore these little puppies, but younger children may not be able to handle the puppy properly. Find time as the parent to supervise your child or children's interactions with the Bichon Frise puppy and start socialization off right for both the kids and the dog.

Always plan for accidents and mistakes on the part of the puppy; he or she will do their very best to learn what you want, but they will not be perfect.

Understanding the puppy is learning just like a child will often help set the right positive attitude for training.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

Talk to breeders and other Bichon Frise owners to find out what you can reasonably expect at different stages and ages with your puppy. Keep in mind that each puppy is different and will mature and learn at slightly different rates. Work with the puppy's natural strengths and abilities rather than trying to have the puppy adapt to what you want when you want it.

Since puppies typically stay with the mother and litter until at least eight weeks of age and the greatest amount of learning and socialization is done then, when your puppy arrives to you he or she has already established some understanding about the world around them. The following are the basic stages and changes that occur from the eight-week mark.

## **EIGHT TO TWELVE WEEKS**

In the period immediately after leaving the breeders, the Bichon Frise puppy is in the best possible developmental stage to form new bonds and understanding of the world it has entered into. During this time you will see:

- A strong natural curiosity about the world around them. Puppies should be introduced in a safe and controlled manner to as many different animals, people and places as possible at this time to socialize the puppy.
- Bichon Frise puppies are not naturally fearful or timid but they may initially run or hide from new things, events, people or sounds. However, they should quickly come about to investigate. Once they learn they have nothing to fear, you will notice the fear response rapidly decrease.
- Puppies need to feel safe and secure at this time. They should have attention and support from the family but should also be allowed some independence to be a puppy. Often their white, fluffy and delicate appearance makes owners think they are not sturdy, hardy and curious puppies that need to have time to investigate the world and learn on their own.
- Bichon Frise puppies should be positively rewarded for a job well done but never punished or yelled at for making a mistake. Punishment at this time can damage the bonding process as well as make the puppies timid as they mature.

## **WEEKS 12 THROUGH 16**

At this point, a well-socialized Bichon Frise puppy that has not been traumatized or frightened, and has bonded well with the family is ready to start serious training. He or she is really also trying to determine the hierarchy of this human pack they are now living in. At this time, you will see:

- The puppy may try to engage the people in the family in games just like they would with other puppies. It is important to play with the puppy and spend time teaching them that they cannot bite or growl at people and that they can play with people with toys.
- Bichon Frise puppies at this age also need to learn their place in the family with regards to other dogs and pets. Since the Bichon Frise is not a dominant breed, they typically get along well with other pets although they may challenge other dogs or cats for who is actually "top dog". This is often done through simple growling and mild possessive type behaviors and rarely results in any overt aggressive behavior on the part of the Bichon Frise. Other dogs may become more aggressive so supervision may be required.
- The Bichon Frise is also ready to start basic obedience training either through a training routine or a puppy class. Puppy obedience classes are highly recommended as they add socialization to the training process.

## **WEEKS 16 THROUGH TO 8 MONTHS**

As with any breed of dog, this is the challenging period roughly equivalent to the early teen years that we humans all go through. Young adult Bichon Frise may start to show a slight independent streak that usually translates into selectively ignoring commands or even flat out refusing to follow instructions.

In addition, the Bichon Frise at this age may start to show more hormonally driven behavior depending on how fast they mature. Males will typically become slightly more dominant and may start to engage in marking behaviors, attempting to run and roam when out of the house, and paying much more attention to female dogs. If you have a male Bichon Frise at this age that has not been neutered it is very important to keep them isolated from any females in heat or keep the females secured and away from the male as they may be capable of breeding even at this young age.

Most vets and breeders now recommend early spaying and neutering rather than later. If at all possible, contact your vet and set an appointment to have Bichon Frise examined to see if he or she can be spayed or neutered at this

time. In some cases the vet may recommend waiting a month or two more if the dog is not quite mature enough or developed enough.

Continuing with a consistent, positive training program is essential at this time. Many owners choose to enroll themselves and their Bichon Frise young dog in more advanced obedience classes to help deal with this somewhat challenging developmental stage.

## **MONTH 8 TO MONTH 14**

Sometime around the first part of the eighth month or occasionally before the eighth month, Bichon Frise puppies will again seem to enter a period of being more afraid of new things than they have been in the past. As with the earlier fear stage, this is best addressed by continued, safe and controlled socialization and interactions. Avoid trying to protect or shelter your dog from safe interactions at this time as this can reinforce their isolation and lead to socialization problems as the dog matures.

The Bichon Frise, at this time, is full of merriment and energy. The Bichon Frise dog will need lots of time to run and play and should also enjoy spending some quiet companion time with the family. They will be outgoing clowns in many cases, seeming to delight in getting the family laughing and involved in a game or chase.

## **MATURITY**

As the Bichon Frise matures, you will only find that he or she is more attached, loving, and involved with the family every year. A Bichon Frise is a breed that stays playful and puppy-like well into their senior years. The Bichon Frise will typically be as eager to go for a walk at 14 as he or she was at 14 months. Many Bichon Frise will live to be over sixteen years of age with proper routine veterinary care and healthy nutrition, exercise and living.

Consistent training and challenging the Bichon Frise to learn new tricks, commands, and routines will keep reinforcing the learning that has already occurred and will keep the dog mentally and physically active and stimulated.

As the Bichon Frise matures, you may also notice that he or she becomes a bit more set in his or her ways, so an occasional refresher obedience class is often just the key to keeping things moving along smoothly. Many owners also find that agility classes and competitions are also great to keep the Bichon Frise active and learning new skills through his or her life.

## **PREPARING TO BRING HOME A GROWN BICHON FRISE DOG**

There are many similarities to bringing home an adult Bichon Frise as to bringing home a puppy, although you will already have a good idea of the dog's size, likes, and dislikes with regards to toys, as well as knowledge about the obedience level and housetraining requirements of the adult Bichon Frise.

### **SUPPLIES**

If at all possible, ask the previous owner or breeder about the dog's preferred play items, treats, bedding and other daily routines so that you can prepare your house or dog area to be welcoming and familiar to the adult dog. The basic supplies that your adult Bichon Frise will need when arriving at your house include:

- **A separate non-skid, non-tip water and food bowl that is not too high to make getting at the contents difficult for the dog**  
Since the Bichon Frise will only need small portions, a smaller sized stainless or heavy plastic bowl will suffice. Since these dogs are very well mannered and not rambunctious, even designer dog food bowls are usually safe with this breed.
- **A quiet, comfortable bed area that may be a crate, doggy bed or even a fabric cube or enclosed sleeping area**  
The Bichon Frise may also want to sleep up on the bed with you. This will be a decision you will have to make if you know the dog has a history of being on the bed with the previous owner. It is easier to set the rules the first day rather than allow a behavior and then try to change it.
- **Tags and collar/harness**  
A collar or harness with identification tags that are correctly labeled and easy to read as well as a good quality leash or lead. Many people prefer a retractable leash and this can be ideal if the dog is already leash trained and heels.
- **Grooming supplies**  
Grooming supplies such as a good quality stiff bristle brush or pin brush, comb, nail clippers for dogs as well as a pair of blunt ended scissors for trimming.
- **First aid**  
A pair of tweezers and an emergency pet first aid kit in case of an accident.

## **PREPARING YOUR HOME**

As with a puppy, it is important to prepare your home, safeguard your treasured items and make the house safe for your new Bichon Frise before the dog arrives.

Remember that this move is stressful for the dog no matter how gently and smoothly it goes, so expect some atypical behavior and anxiety until the adult Bichon Frise is able to feel comfortable and adjust to the move.

A great idea is to restrict the areas that the Bichon Frise has access to, at least for the first few days. This will help you determine if the dog understands that this is their house and living area and follows the houstraining rules to ask to go outside. If you provide full access to the house, the dog may be toileting in another area of the house that you may not discover until a pattern or habit has been established.

If you have pets in the house, they should be removed from the area that the Bichon Frise will be started off in. It may be difficult to keep a cat or other housedog out of the area, but it can frighten and even terrify the Bichon Frise to have other animals in the area during the transition.

In addition, these pets are likely to be territorial and protective, not understanding that the Bichon Frise is now a member of the family. Baby gates can be very effective at allowing the new Bichon Frise and your current pets to get to know each other before allowing them to interact in the same room or area.

Safety check the room for any materials that may be destroyed or damaged if the Bichon Frise engages in chewing or soiling type behaviors. You may also wish to use a pet enzyme product to remove any possible odors of other pet's urine in the area to decrease the chances that the Bichon Frise may try to mark their new space. This is particularly important with intact male Bichon Frise dogs that may have a history of marking behaviors.

Remind children that the Bichon Frise, while loving their attention and play time, will also need some time to just settle in. Consider restricting or planning down time for the new dog to just explore and discover the new house and all the many new scents and objects in the house.



## **WHAT TO EXPECT**

Plan for the worse and hope for the best is often the best way to deal with bringing home an adult Bichon Frise. These little dogs are so intelligent and so wonderfully loving and social that there are usually few problems with re-homing, although there will be a definite adjustment period.

During the first few weeks, it is important to keep the new Bichon Frise on a leash or in a secured, fenced yard whenever they are out of the house. They may not fully understand that this is their new home and they may have a tendency to try to get back to their previous home. Usually after two or three weeks, this issue is not as problematic.

Keep in mind that the Bichon Frise breed is often a bit challenging to housetrain, as are most small breeds. When the dogs are stressed from changing homes, you may notice that they regress in their behaviors and may need some extra attention and retraining when it comes to learning to go outside.

You will also have to learn about the Bichon Frise dog's natural schedule that will help you anticipate and predict when they will need to be let outdoors or taken for a walk to relieve themselves. Crate training can be very helpful at this time and will be particularly effective if this is the method used by the previous owners.

Avoid any loud noises or frightening sounds and try to keep the house as chaos free as possible. If the Bichon Frise is coming from a home with children, they will be much more tolerant of lots of noise and activity, but if they haven't had kids in the house before, this will also be an adjustment.

Plan a schedule and keep to it as much as possible. The Bichon Frise will largely accommodate his or her schedule to yours as soon as they have the routine down. Play with the dog and spend lots of time just being around the dog to help him or her settle in.

## **INTRODUCING YOUR BICHON FRISE TO OTHERS**

Whether you have an adult or puppy Bichon Frise, socialization and interactions with other pets, animals and people is an important part of the ongoing training your dog will require to be well behaved and well adjusted. The more safe and fun experiences the dog has with meeting new animals and people, the happier and friendlier he or she will be in all settings and environment.

Since the Bichon Frise is known as a highly social breed that is not typically dog aggressive or aggressive towards people, socialization is often very simple and stress free.

## **INTRODUCING YOUR BICHON FRISE TO ANOTHER DOG**

As mentioned above, it is usually not a problem to introduce a Bichon Frise to another dog simply because they are so social and non-aggressive. It is more likely that the other dog will become aggressive so ensuring that both dogs are under control is key as a larger dog could easily intimidate your Bichon Frise.

Always allow both dogs to calm down and be attentive and under control before starting any introductions. With both dogs restrained, allow them to smell at each other watching for any indications of dominance such as lifting the ears, head and tail, pushing against the other dog with the chest or growling. If this occurs, immediately separate the dogs and allow them to calm down and start again.

Once the dogs have sniffed each other and there are no signs of aggression or dominance, there will typically be few problems. If the other breed is a dominant or aggressive breed, do not leave your Bichon Frise unsupervised with the dog under any circumstance. Always introduce a dominant breed to a Bichon Frise in a neutral environment such as a park or in the Bichon Frise dog's yard or house to prevent even more aggression or possessive territorial behavior by the dominant type of dog.

## **INTRODUCING A BICHON FRISE TO A CAT**

Another plus for the breed, the Bichon Frise is a very cat friendly dog that typically accepts the cat as a member of the household without the typical dog/cat interactions, chasing and silly behavior. The Bichon Frise is particularly well suited to homes with cats but does best with a cat that is already friendly and tolerant of dogs. Often, the cat has far more issues with the introduction than that Bichon Frise dog will have.

As with the dogs, do the introductions slowly, never forcing the dog or cat to be physically closer to each other than they want to be. The Bichon Frise puppy or dog may chase if the cat makes a dash for it so try to keep the cat and puppy or dog well under control until they have had a chance to get to know each other through scent and gradual desensitization. Usually, the dog and cat will work this out on their own with the cat staying out of the dog's way until he or she is comfortable.

The best possible option is to raise a Bichon Frise with a kitten. This will result in a well-bonded set of companion pets that will often sleep together, eat together, and definitely play together. The outstanding nature of the Bichon Frise is really very evident in its interaction with cats.

## **INTRODUCING YOUR BICHON FRISE TO OTHER SPECIES**

As with cats, the Bichon Frise will usually do well with other small and large animals in the house. Of course, all dogs are tempted to chase rodents, and while the Bichon Frise does not have a high prey instinct, they may be tempted to chase hamsters, gerbils, or even ferrets.

Keeping a close eye on the Bichon Frise with these pets is important, but generally, once they understand to leave the pets alone there will be few issues. Never leave any dog unsupervised with smaller pets as they may injure the smaller species just in play without meaning to be aggressive in any way.

Bichon Frise are a small dog and need to be carefully monitored around larger species such as sheep, goats, horses or cattle if you live in the country or are visiting a farm. It is not that the dogs will cause problems with the livestock but rather it is that the livestock may kick or step on the smaller dogs.

Always keep the Bichon Frise well supervised or on a leash in these settings unless they have experience around livestock.

## **INTRODUCING YOUR BICHON FRISE TO STRANGERS AND CHILDREN**

It is often reported that the Bichon Frise is one of the least intimidating dogs and therefore is ideal for even strangers and children that are fearful and nervous of dogs. It is hard to imagine anyone being afraid of a cute, friendly little powder puff with bright shiny eyes and a black button nose.

When the puppy is young, be sure to allow him or her lots of opportunities to meet new people. Allow the puppy to sniff at the person and then move in closer, never force or drag the puppy towards someone without giving him or her time to feel comfortable.

Often puppies may appear nervous of larger or smaller people than they are used to or people that have a particular odor such as cigarette smoke or certain colognes. Allowing the puppy time to process the smell and encouraging the person to just be patient and allow the puppy to come to them is very critical.

Kids will be so excited to see a Bichon Frise puppy or dog that often all that needs to happen is to ask the children to be calm and give the dog a chance to come up to them.

It is not a good idea to allow children to hold or pick up the Bichon Frise puppy or dog because kids that aren't used to dogs or puppies may accidentally drop the puppy or squeeze too tight, both which will be a negative experience for the puppy. Work with children that understand how to properly pick up and hold a puppy or dog to complete this aspect of the training.

## **CHILD SAFETY AND SMALL DOGS**

Not a snappy or timid dog, the Bichon Frise has a natural love and enjoyment of interacting with children. As with any breed of dog, children have to learn to respect the dog and look for signs that they dog has had enough attention or playing for the time being. Children need to be taught:

- Never move quickly towards the dog or puppy or make any kind of threatening moves towards the animal even in play.
- Never tease the dog with food, treats, or toys. It is fine to play with the dog but don't tease or taunt as this can turn even very well behaved dogs into more aggressive and possessive animals.
- Never try to grab at or hold the dog or puppy if he or she is struggling to get away. This can trigger a "fight or flight" response that may cause the dog to snap, or can even injure the dog as it struggles to get away.
- Supervise your child with the dog or puppy and teach your child how to understand what the dog is trying to say. Teaching children to read the Bichon Frise dogs behavior is a key part of learning how to interact with the dog.
- In cases where the Bichon Frise is timid around children parents or adults should supervise all interactions until the dog understands that the children are part of the family and that they are not harmful.
- If children are responsible for feeding, walking or caring for the Bichon Frise be sure to check-up on their chores regularly to make sure they are doing things as they should be done.

Children should also learn that not all dogs are as friendly and social as their Bichon Frise. Kids should treat all strange dogs as aggressive and also learn how to protect their Bichon Frise should they encounter a dog that is not with its owner while on a walk or outside of their fenced yard.

Teaching kids these basics will help them become better pet owners, plus will also encourage a bond between the Bichon Frise and the children, something that will benefit them both.

# 5

## YOUR NEW DOG'S NEEDS



### **EXERCISING YOUR BICHON FRISE**

Just like people, exercise and diet are an important part of your Bichon Frise dog's life and daily routine. Without enough exercise, adult or senior Bichon Frise will become overweight which often leads to many other health problems.

Exercise is important for Bichon Frise because it helps strengthen your pet's circulatory and respiratory system, keeps their joints flexible and muscles toned, and helps improve their sleep and digestion. Along with relieving boredom, when your Bichon Frise gets its proper amount of exercise, it releases energy so the dog is less likely to destroy things such as shoes and furniture.

Small breeds of dog such as the Bichon Frise do not require the long walks or high-energy exercises that larger breeds need. In addition, the amount of exercise a Bichon Frise requires will vary due to the age of the dog.

## **AGE**

The age of your Bichon Frise will make a difference in the most appropriate amount and type of energy. The Bichon Frise is a typically moderately energetic dog all through his or her life that can adapt and adjust to either indoor or outdoor exercise activities. Working within your schedule and prioritizing exercise time is an important part of caring for the Bichon Frise.

## **PUPPIES**

Bichon Frise puppies require controlled exercise because their bones and joints are still developing. Very short walks and play periods is sufficient for most puppies but remember that they tire quickly and require a lot of rest and sleep. Just like other dogs, Bichon Frise puppies like routine, so once you establish one, try to follow it.

Taking your puppy outside for playtime or a walk is good for their mental as well as physical health. A change in the surroundings stimulates your puppy's senses and should always be a fun, healthy experience. On short walks, puppies get a chance to meet other people, dogs and explore new things, which helps them develop into well-socialized, confident, happy adults.

## **ADULTS**

As your Bichon Frise reaches adulthood, you may want to increase the length of their walk but it varies from dog to dog. A twice daily walk not only gives your dog needed exercise but help socialize them as there are new sights and sounds to explore. They meet other dogs, people, and experience and explore new things that help your Bichon Frise to develop into a well-adjusted, contented dog.

Bichon Frise have minimal exercise needs, so some dogs prefer very short walks. Playing tag or fetch with them is a wonderful way to make sure they get enough exercise while it helps to strengthen the dog/owner bond. Play periods in your own fenced backyard provides a safe place for your Bichon Frise to chase his toys, play fetch and run. Fenced-in dog parks allow dogs to play off-leash together supervised by their owners, is great exercise, and helps with their socialization skills.

## **SENIOR DOGS**

Just like Bichon Frise puppies and adult dogs, most senior dogs still require some modified exercise. When buying new toys, make sure the toys are pliable, soft, and easy on your dog's gums and teeth. When playing with or walking your senior Bichon Frise, always watch for any signs of pain or fatigue.

Older dogs often have less energy and slow down a little. Unable to manage as much exercise as when they were younger, for some Bichon Frise seniors, a short walk and a little fresh air is sufficient. If your pet has specific health problems, always talk to your veterinarian about your Bichon Frise exercise needs.

## **PHYSICAL CONDITION**

Although all dogs need exercise, some more than others, Bichon Frise are usually very active on their own and do not require the rigorous exercise that many of the larger breeds need. Along with size, the exercise requirements of all dogs vary with the breed of dog, age, and physical condition. An adult Bichon Frise in good physical shape often receives enough exercise from walks and playing.

When your pet has a specific physical condition, his or her exercise requirements often change. Always discuss any exercises with your veterinarian first for a Bichon Frise with specific physical conditions or health problems. Overdoing any exercise, such as taking him on a walk that is long and fatigues him or too much vigorous exercise, can be more harmful than beneficial to your pet.

Never take your pet with any physical problems out walking in extreme weather conditions such as snow or rain and always watch for signs of fatigue or distress.

Some Bichon Frise dogs end up becoming overweight due to overeating from boredom, high caloric intake, or lack of exercise. Depending upon how overweight your pet is, your vet may recommend reducing the dogs main meal by a small percentage, switching to a lower calorie pet food, or cutting back on the amount of snacks and treats. Along with this, adding or increasing daily exercise helps burn off weight.



Walking your dog a couple times daily or increasing the length of its walk by a few minutes will slowly make a difference in its weight. Having a more vigorous playtime is also beneficial. Be patient because your Bichon Frise did not gain the weight overnight, so he requires a healthy diet and exercise program to lose it slowly.

If your Bichon Frise is pregnant, she needs to remain in peak condition and toned physically during this period. For a healthy pregnant Bichon Frise, there is no reason to restrict her normal physical activities unless your veterinarian has reason to suggest otherwise. Restricting her normal exercise routine is harmful both emotionally because she could become discontent and physically due to reduced muscle tone.

Short daily walks until the sixth or seventh week of pregnancy is ideal and short play periods at her normal rate are good. Let your pet set her own exercise pace. Be sure if you have children, they understand that it is all right to play with their dog but be gentle.

If your Bichon Frise has joint problems such as arthritis, it could make movement painful and difficult due to stiffness and inflammation. Your veterinarian can help you control your pet's pain and recommend exercises to help your Bichon Frise maintain mobility.

Choose a more joint-friendly, low impact activity such as a short walk on softer surfaces such as grass or dirt. Always let your dog choose the pace and never rush him. Before you add anything new to your arthritic dogs program, always talk it over first with your veterinarian.

## **VARIETY**

As a rule, the Bichon Frise breeds are small dogs that are active indoors and take care of many of their own exercise needs. For people with fenced yards, their Bichon Frise gets exercise running around the yard. They are ideal for apartment living or homes with or without a yard.

A short walk or outing a couple times daily helps not only with exercise but with socialization as the dog meets other dogs, people, children and gets to experience different interesting sounds and sights.

Taking your adult Bichon Frise for a short walk a few times daily is excellent but be sure to allow them to spend a little time sniffing, investigating, and enjoying the experience. Dogs that get enough exercise are less likely to become obese, destructive, or bored.

There are a variety of exercises for your Bichon Frise that not only keep your dog fit physically, but also helps your pet with recall and keeping its mind focused and sharp. Playing fetch indoors or outdoors in a fenced yard or dog park is a fun way to spend time with your pet while he gets playtime exercise. Some dogs immediately bring back their toy or ball while others, once they get the object, try to keep the toy or will not release it.

Fetch can turn into great obedience training by rewarding your pet when he does bring the ball back directly to you. Use a word such as "Bring" to get him to return the toy and "Drop" to release it.

Once your Bichon Frise understands about bringing his toy back and releasing it, another fun exercise is tag. Give your dog one of his favorite balls or toys and then use a command such as "Get You" or "Keep Away" while making reaching gestures.

Once your pet catches on to this game, you will be amazed at the energy he puts into the game. When it is time to stop, give your Bichon Frise the "Bring" and "Drop" command but be sure to praise him after he does this.

Bichon Frise dogs are social animals and most love to play with other dog friends. If you have family or friends with dogs and the dogs all get along well together, occasionally have a doggie afternoon where the dogs get to run and play together while the adults watch them and socialize. This will be an enjoyable experience for the dogs and their owners.

Exercising your Bichon Frise should be fun for both you and your pet. Never make exercise rigid, a chore or uncomfortable for your dog. Remember that every dog regardless of breed has their own unique personality and types of exercise for one Bichon Frise are not necessarily suitable for all of them.

## **DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES**

All owners of a Bichon Frise want their pet to be a healthy, happy member of the family. Although they are delicate in appearance and small, Bichon Frise dogs are athletic and hardy and require a moderate amount of daily exercise. Good exercise routines and activities depend upon the dog's physical condition and its likes and dislikes.

Walking your Bichon Frise twice daily at a moderate pace on a leash is usually sufficient exercise for an adult, healthy dog. Using an extendible leash on a Bichon Frise that tends to pull could be dangerous because, if unlocked, your dog could suddenly dart out onto the road.

A six-foot leash of nylon is lightweight but gives you excellent control over your Bichon Frise as you can shorten or lengthen the leash by wrapping it around your hand. Use a harness type leash on a dog that pulls because a regular collar pulling against their neck could damage your Bichon Frise's trachea.

Some Bichon Frise dogs are very easy to train to walk properly on a leash, while others pull at the slightest distraction. It is dangerous to let your Bichon Frise off-leash in unenclosed areas where you have little control over him. A fenced yard or supervising your dog in a private dog park is a far safer alternative.

Bichon Frise love playtime exercise activities and toys. Be sure the toys you select for playtime exercise are safe and not dangerous for your pet. Never get a toy or ball too small for your pet as it could end up stuck in the dog's throat when playing fetch. Never play fetch with sticks because your dog could damage his mouth or end up with a splinter. Take your dogs own toys to the park or backyard for fun exercise and playtime to avoid contact with possible bacterial and viral infections on other dog's toys.

When it comes to exercise activity, Bichon Frise puppies under six months tire rapidly and should exercise at their own rate and never after eating. Between six months and eighteen months of age, be very careful not to over-exercise your puppy, as it could be dangerous or harmful.

Your Bichon Frise puppy's joints, until older than eighteen months, are very tender and susceptible to injuries and bone problems because their bones do not develop as quickly as the puppies' bodies. As puppies develop, their growing weight combined with over-exercise can certainly cause problems such as bone damage. When it comes to safe exercise for your Bichon Frise puppy, remember the best rule, which is often and little, until he becomes an adult.

If your Bichon Frise is a senior, many dogs need more frequent, but shorter walks if his health permits. It is dangerous to force your senior dog to exercise beyond what he is capable of because he will tire quicker and may be prone to problems with their heart or respiratory system. Talk to your veterinarian about any exercise plans for your senior or overweight Bichon Frise so you do not put them in any danger.

## **DIET AND NUTRITION BASICS**

As a small breed of dog, the Bichon Frise has some specific diet and nutritional needs that are different than for larger breeds of dogs. Smaller dogs tend to be more prone to heart problems and disease, diabetes as well as becoming overweight, which can cause serious health problems as the dog matures.

Being a responsible Bichon Frise owner means learning the unique diet and nutrition needs for your dog and choosing foods which meet these needs. A breeder, your vet or even an animal nutritionist can help in developing a specialized diet if your Bichon Frise develops any nutritionally related conditions. These professionals can also ensure that your Bichon Frise eats health and nutritious food through his or her life.

### **OMNIVORES NOT CARNIVORES**

Dogs are not strictly meat eaters or carnivores - they are actually omnivores, meaning that they will eat almost anything including vegetables and fruits. Most owners have also seen dogs eating grass and even leaves at one time or another. Many dogs, including the Bichon Frise, enjoy a slice of apple or a piece of carrot or broccoli as much as they like a commercial treat or a bit of meat.

While your perfectly groomed Bichon Frise may bear little resemblance to a wild dog, he or she still has the same needs for vitamins, minerals, and nutrients that are found in other types of food items besides meat. Balancing all these different requirements can be challenging however most commercially available high quality food are already balanced, making feeding a balanced diet much less difficult.

## **WHAT ARE THE DIETARY NEEDS OF A BICHON FRISE DOG?**

Proper nutrition for your Bichon Frise is as important as your own nutritional needs. A well balanced diet is the key to helping your pet live a healthy, long life. Bichon Frise puppy's energy requirements are far higher than that of a mature or adult dog, so they need specially formulated food to meet their dietary and nutritional requirements.

You should provide your puppy with a good quality, highly digestible, one hundred percent balanced and complete premium formula that is nutrient dense for growth. Some of the many results from feeding your Bichon Frise puppy a premium puppy formula includes; healthy bones, teeth, and skin; excellent muscle tone, luxurious, shiny fur; playfulness and an energetic, happy attitude, and shiny, clear eyes.

Different breeds require different formulas based on the breed size and since the growth rates of the puppies differ. Small breed puppies such as the Bichon Frise have, in a short length of time, growth spurts and development that continues until adulthood. Because they have a small mouth and stomach, Bichon Frise puppies requires a formula that supplies them with a lot of energy and nutrition packed into a small amount of high-quality puppy food.

Never try to save money by feeding your Bichon Frise puppy a poor quality diet. This could result in poor skeletal and muscle development and growth.

An adult Bichon Frise, just like puppies, requires a one hundred percent balanced and complete diet, specially formulated for their activity level and small size. Optimal nutrition is one of the most important ways to enhance your dog's life. Because small dogs have tiny stomachs and mouths, some owners prefer feeding their pet easy to chew, smaller kibble. Feeding your dog a nutrient-dense, premium formula helps him get all the necessary nutrients required.

Most Bichon Frise receive their daily exercise through walks and play, so they require a nutrient dense diet especially formulated for small dogs with a moderate to normal activity level. Some of the necessary ingredients for good nutrition to meet your dog needs include such things as protein from chicken or other meat sources to aid your pet in maintaining its important muscle structure.

Immune system boosters such as vitamin E and beta-carotene, omega 3 and 6 fatty acids for coat and skin health support, carbohydrate blends for nutritionally sustained energy and proper blood sugar levels, and fiber sources that are moderately fermentable to help properly maintain your Bichon Frise's intestinal tract are all very important in your dogs diet.

The dietary needs for senior Bichon Frise or ones that are pregnant, nursing, overweight, or with specific health problems are different from those of a healthy, normally active dog. Be sure to discuss your pet's special needs and diet with your veterinarian. This will help you feel confident that your Bichon Frise always receives the premium dog food necessary to provide your pet with a well-balanced, 100 percent complete diet.

## **WHAT NOT TO FEED YOUR BICHON FRISE**

As surprising as it sounds, many foods that are perfectly safe for humans to eat contain toxins that are harmful or even fatal to Bichon Frise and other dogs. You could be unknowingly poisoning your pet by giving the dog table scraps, tidbits and other foods such as grapes, sugar free candy, and chocolate. Some common foods that can cause serious health risks in even small amounts include:

- A xanthine compound Theobromine, found in chocolate, is the ingredient that makes it dangerous for dogs. Unsweetened baking chocolate has six times more Theobromine than milk chocolate. Some large dogs seem to be able to handle a small amount of chocolate but for smaller dogs such as Bichon Frise, the same amount can poison or even kill them.
- Cocoa bean mulch used in gardens also contains Theobromine and is poisonous to dogs. Unfortunately, many dogs find cocoa bean mulches wonderful chocolate smell irresistible. Never feed any chocolate to your dogs regardless of the dog's size or the type of chocolate.
- Grapes and raisins can cause fatal kidney failure in some Bichon Frise and other dogs. For some unknown reason, there are dogs that grapes and raisins seem to have no ill effect on while others become very ill after eating only a couple. Although the exact toxin is unknown to date, the first symptom of illness from grapes and raisins is vomiting, followed by fatal kidney failure.
- Many sugar free candy and gum contains a sweetener called xylitol, also known as wood or birch sugar. Sugar free gum or candy eaten in large amounts by your Bichon Frise could result in a rapid blood sugar drop in the dog. Signs that often develop rapidly include coordination loss, depression, and seizures. Seek veterinary treatment immediately if your dog displays any of these signs.
- Feeding your Bichon Frise fatty foods such as turkey skin and ham fat could overtax the pancreas causing pancreatitis. Symptoms of inflammation of the pancreas include stomach pain and vomiting. Immediately take your dog to the vet if he displays any symptoms, as this is definitely a medical emergency. Never feed your dog fatty foods such as ham fat or turkey skin as it is better to be safe than sorry.

- Alcohol poisoning could occur in your Bichon Frise if he eats bread dough containing yeast. It can release alcohol in large quantities when it ferments in your dogs' stomach.
- You should avoid feeding your Bichon Frise most nuts due to their high phosphorus content and definitely never feed macadamia nuts to your Bichon Frise. These could cause temporary rear leg paralysis in your pet.
- Raw eggs should be avoided in the Bichon Frise diet as they can cause in the body to be unable to absorb biotin resulting in skin and coat problems. Cooked eggs are an excellent source of protein and can be a great addition to the diet in small amounts.
- Avoid feeding your Bichon Frise any type of cat food as it is very high in protein, fats and sugars that can be very serious in dogs with diabetes.
- Dairy products such as milk and cheese can be problematic for lactose intolerant dogs resulting in diarrhea and vomiting.

## **FEEDING YOUR DOG**

Bichon Frise dogs are not known as finicky or picky eaters, but can become particular as to the types and kinds of food that they like. Often, the kind of food that the Bichon Frise would prefer should he or she get to choose is not the best option for the dog's overall health and well-being. Choosing the right type of food as well as the how to feed your Bichon Frise so a schedule can be developed is very important.

Bichon Frise puppies should be fed small meals frequently throughout the day, to closely mimic the feeding routine they would have had with the mother dog. Most breeders recommend feeding puppies over the age of eight weeks and under the age of three months at least four times per day, with some puppies needing a fifth feeding if they are only eating small amounts at the other meals. Once puppies reach three months of age, they can be dropped back to two to three meals a day, depending on the individual puppy and if this is possible with scheduling.

Once puppies are over six months of age, they are typically fed twice a day unless free choice food is available. Each puppy will have different food requirements based on their growth rate, overall exercise level and health. Adult dogs over the age of one year should be fed two smaller meals a day, rather than one larger meal. This tends to help balance blood sugars and

prevent digestive problems if the Bichon Frise tends to gulp his or her food at single feedings.

Always carefully monitor your Bichon Frise, and consult your vet immediately if the dog chooses not to eat for more than three meals in a row. It is normal that during teething, or if the dog is already diagnosed with an illness or is on medication, food intake may change and your vet can provide you with this information.

Once a schedule for feeding and a feed type is determined, it is easier to housetrain, monitor and check on the dog's overall health and monitor their growth, development and maintenance over the years. One thing to keep in mind is that dogs, unlike people, are perfectly happy eating the same food every day, and some vets recommend never changing feeds unless there is a specific health condition that necessitates a change.

## **WET VERSUS DRY**

Your Bichon Frise dog's nutrition is extremely important, so whether you choose to feed your pet dry or wet food, always be sure it is premium dog food and not a generic brand. Some people believe homemade dog food is better for their Bichon Frise while others feed their pet dry, wet, or semi-moist commercially manufactured premium dog food.

Cheaper brands of dog food often contain more grain fillers, animal by-products, and less meat than premium brands, while some of the more expensive dog foods may include ingredients such as free-range meats or organic products. They categorize commercial dog food as canned (or wet), semi-moist, or dry, depending upon the moisture content of the food.

### **DRY FOODS**

A premium dry dog food for your Bichon Frise is the type of food most often recommended by veterinarians. When you compare the average dry dog food per pound to semi-moist or canned dog food, it is the least expensive of the three. Canned food contains up to seventy-eight percent moisture while dry food is usually less than ten percent moisture.

In terms of dental health, dry food is better for your Bichon Frise because it aids in reducing or even preventing tartar buildup. This helps keep your dogs' gums and teeth healthy longer. Unlike canned food containers, the packaging on dry food is environmentally friendly. A bowl of dry dog food



remains fresh far longer than a bowl of canned dog food, which spoils quickly, especially in warm environments.

Kibble made using the extrusion process, where it is sprayed with oils, fats, vitamins, and other products, does become rancid from high heat whereas baked kibble does not spoil as quickly and has a longer shelf life. Some Bichon Frise owners prefer dry food because it is not as messy to serve or clean up as canned food and does not have its strong aroma. Dry food does need to be stored properly to keep it from going stale.

## **CANNED FOOD**

Some Bichon Frise owners prefer canned or wet dog food even though it costs more than dry food although vets or breeders do not generally recommend it. The dog food cans on the market make it very convenient for feeding your pet both at home and while traveling.

Wet food often appeals to a Bichon Frise owner's puppy or dog because of the moisture and aromatic smell. For senior dogs, wet or semi-moist food is easier on their gums and teeth. You should never leave wet dog food down for more than thirty minutes for your Bichon Frise, as bacteria growth could occur in the food leading to health and digestive problems.

In terms of actual content, canned food contains more water so is often lower in fat and protein but may be more palatable to dogs that are recovering from an illness or surgery.

## **SEMI-MOIST FOOD**

Many Bichon Frise owners like the convenience of semi-moist food in pouches. Semi-moist food has, environmentally friendly packaging, comes in measured meal packs, remains fresh in the packs longer, and nutritionally balanced. The down side is that semi-moist food often contains preservatives, coloring agents, and additives.

Typically, most breeders and vets do not recommend semi-moist foods as a long-term feeding option although it may be very practical when traveling or if a dog is temporarily requiring a specialized diet.

## **SCHEDULED FEEDING VERSUS FREE FEEDING**

Since the Bichon Frise is a naturally active dog that is not prone to becoming overweight with proper care and exercise it is often very acceptable to allow this breed free access to food. This particular feeding style can only be used

if dry food is in the diet as canned or semi-moist foods will be likely to spoil or become a breeding ground for bacteria if left out.

Some of the pros to free feeding include:

- The dog has access to the food when he or she is hungry and they are less likely to overeat or eat large amounts at one time.
- Owners that have variable schedules don't have to worry about the dog not being fed on time.
- Dogs can select or adjust to their own unique feeding schedule.

Some problems with free access feeding are:

- It is hard to monitor how much the dog is eating per day or per feeding.
- If there is more than one dog in the house there is no way to control if the food is being evenly shared between the dogs.
- Some dogs may overeat and may not adjust well to free access feeding.
- It will make houstraining much more difficult.

Scheduled feeding enables the owner to monitor the food intake, plan for trips outside to go to the bathroom as well as ensure that each dog is eating only what is portion controlled for their requirements. Canned or semi-moist foods or even soaked kibble should only ever be fed under scheduled feeding routines and should be collected after 30 minutes and thrown away.

## **HOME COOKING FOR YOUR BICHON FRISE**

Unlike years ago, today there are many varieties of dog foods available on the market and three main categories. The first group is inexpensive dog food usually found in mass-marketed retailers and grocery stores. These foods often contain inexpensive, lower quality ingredients. Premium dog food found in veterinarian's offices, pet food stores, and some grocery stores cost more and sometimes, but not always, contain higher quality ingredients. Homemade dog food is the third group.

More Bichon Frise owners are now cooking for their treasured pet for a variety of reasons. With the recent recall of various brands of dog food, many owners are worried and cautious about buying commercial dog food. People with Bichon Frise dogs that suffer from food allergies are looking to home cooking, hoping to reduce or eliminate their pet's allergies.

Some owners want to know exactly what their dog is eating, know that their pet's food does not contain any artificial flavors, coloring, preservatives, or other possibly harmful ingredients so they choose to make it themselves.

In the majority of commercial pet foods, carbohydrates often make up more than half the main ingredients so it is more difficult for many dogs to digest. Home cooked food provides more protein and fewer carbohydrates making it better for the Bichon Frise dog's immune system and easier for your dog to digest. Unlike over-processed commercial pet foods, lightly or freshly home cooked dog food provides a more natural form of nutrients.

For a Bichon Frise owner that is considering making his or her own home cooked pet food, spend some time doing research on proper nutrition and diet so your pet receives the correct vitamins, nutrients, and other ingredients necessary for a safe, healthy, complete diet. Sometimes you need a couple of recipes in order for your Bichon Frise to get the correct combination of nutrients.

Although making home cooked dog food is not difficult, it does take more time than opening a can or placing dried commercial dog food into a bowl. Be sure you have not only the time, but also the energy required to cook for your pet.

When it comes to home cooking for your Bichon Frise, there are several diets including ones with no or very little grains, cooked and raw foods, and even cooked or raw bones just to name a few. No one diet is perfect for every dog or breed of dog. Just like people, each Bichon Frise is individual and their home cooked diet depends upon things such as their size, physical condition, age, and activity level.

Most articles and research on home cooking for your dog such as a Bichon Frise stress variety because it is difficult to know your pet is getting all the required nutrients with one recipe. Using several recipes that change content and food groups not only add variety for your dog, but also usually meet your pet's nutritional needs.

The Do your research so you are sure your Bichon Frise receives the correct amount and necessary ingredients from home cooked meals to remain healthy.

## **PREMIUM FOODS**

If you don't plan to make your own home made dog food, there are lots of different options that will allow you to rest assured that your Bichon Frise is getting a nutritionally balanced diet. A premium quality food produced by a manufacturer will provide such assurance. The most recognized premium food producers are:

- Eukanuba
- IAMS
- Science Diet
- Breeder's Choice
- Black Gold
- Hills
- Nutrience

Look for kibble size that is suitable for a small dog, but do not substitute puppy kibble as this has a much higher protein content than adult dogs require.

# 6

## TRAINING YOUR DOG



### **TIPS FOR TRAINING YOUR BICHON FRISE**

One of the many benefits of getting a puppy is that you now have the opportunity to train him or her in just the fashion that you prefer. This is also a responsibility, however, and will take time, energy, patience, and lots of hard work by both you as the owner as well as the puppy or dog.

Training a Bichon Frise is not as challenging as working with some of the other smaller breeds and many of the larger breeds, but it does take work and skill to ensure that the dog or puppy learns what you are trying to teach.

There are differences in training a puppy or an adult dog. For purposes of this chapter, the discussion will focus on teaching or training a puppy that has not been previously trained. Training an adult Bichon Frise will be largely the same method, but will also include an extra step of "unlearning" or extinguishing the previous learning. Since puppies don't have this additional step, it often means that training is easier and less complicated.

Training a dog involves a great deal of patience, understanding, and a good sense of humor. The Bichon Frise will naturally want to make you happy of his or her accomplishments and is highly motivate to learn and do what you want.

Capitalizing on this natural love of learning and interaction with people will make your training times fun, stress free and educational for the puppy. Days when you feel tired, stressed or just not "with it" should be days to just review what the puppy already knows and keep training times very short.

Never try to teach a new command or routine when you are tired, angry or simply not interested in focusing 100% on what is going on with the puppy. It is far better to skip a day than to not be consistent or possible even reinforce a bad habit.

Remember that a Bichon Frise is a very intelligent breed that may be trying to train you while you think you are training the dog. While not independent or headstrong, they will have their moments when they test if you are really paying attention. Being consistent, firm and positive with the puppy and providing lots of praise, the occasional treat and lost of attention during training is the most effective way to work with your Bichon Frise puppy.

### **MAKE TRAINING FUN**

Making training fun for your puppy is important to encourage them to want to participate in training lessons. Keep the training sessions very short and appropriate for the age of the puppy.

Remember that fun means spending a bit of time before and after the session doing something that the puppy likes such as going for a walk and playing with a favorite toy. By spending a few minutes providing exercise and attention before and after training sessions, you build in a natural fun component for the puppy plus allow him or her to burn off all that excess energy and increase their ability to focus.

Remember that the Bichon Frise is a breed that is highly motivated by attention and praise from the owner. You won't need a whole bunch of treats with these puppies, a pat and lots of praise and attention for a job well done will motivate these dogs as much as a treat. Do give a few treats throughout the training session just to add a bit of an extra reward.

### **MAKE TRAINING NATURAL**

The Bichon Frise is not a breed that needs to repeat commands and routines multiple times in one training session. This excessive repetition will only lead to boredom and non-compliance when it ceases to be fun or rewarding to the puppy.

One command to sit should be followed by other commands and then another sit command, not multiple sit commands in a row. It is also important to not train immediately before or after feeding times as the puppy is normal distracted and excited or full and sleepy at these times.

Watch for other opportunities to catch the puppy following commands outside of the training time. Give lots of praise and recognition when he or she sits when you come home or comes when you call.

## **KEEP TRAINING CONSISTENT**

It is extremely confusing for the puppy if things are not kept consistent over time and between people. It is usually advisable to have one person work with the Bichon Frise puppy to teach a command and then have other family members learn how to work with the puppy giving the command rather than have everyone work with the puppy during the learning stage.

This is particularly important if children are working with the puppy, as they may inadvertently reward bad or inappropriate behavior through lack of correction or simply by laughing at the puppy's antics when they are in training.

Use the same terminology or name for the command at all times. Different people may choose to use different words for basic commands and that is not as important as the fact that they are the words that are consistent for that puppy. A dog may not understand that "Come here" and "Here boy" are the same command until they become more familiar with a variety of commands.

## **PATIENCE IS THE KEY**

Just like you, the puppy will have good days and bad days, distracted days and highly focused days and days they really just want to goof off. Be patient and work with the dog, only he or she can set the pace of learning.

Try to find a quiet place to start your basic training and command work. In busy households where people are moving about, food is being prepared and there is lots of activity the puppy may be too distracted to completely focus. You may also want to consider an obedience class or training to get the puppy through basic commands and obedience under the training and support of a professional dog trainer.

If you are considering an obedience or puppy training class, ask if the trainer offers classes for small breeds that are separate from larger breeds. This will allow you to focus specifically on the specialized issues of working with small breed dogs such as the Bichon Frise.

## **NEVER HIT A PUPPY**

There is never, ever, any reason to hit a puppy. Hitting a dog is not needed to establish that you are the leader, nor does it assist in any way in training a puppy. The only thing that hitting a puppy will accomplish, especially in a highly social and intelligent breed such as the Bichon Frise, is to create a dog that is fearful of people, timid and possibly even aggressive towards people when it feels threatened.

For most Bichon Frise puppies, a simple and low toned "NO" followed by ignoring the puppy is all that is needed to get the message across that you are not happy about the behavior. Focus on rewarding the dog for doing the right thing and the negative behaviors will simply vanish from the dog's routine, as they don't accomplish what the Bichon Frise wants, which is your praise and attention.

## **GET IN A ROUTINE**

Start working on a routine for your Bichon Frise puppy that includes exercise, training, feeding and even sleeping. A puppy that is used to a routine will be cued in advance when they need to focus on you to get your attention and when they have your attention to play or just enjoy being around you. The more scheduled you can be with your puppy the easier housetraining and even feeding your puppy will be as he or she gains a greater understanding of life in your home.

## **THE BASICS OF DOG TRAINING**

One of the most important considerations when training your Bichon Frise is that the most effective training methods will work with the puppy's natural behaviors rather than against them. Good trainers and owners capitalize on the puppy's existing strengths rather than work from their weaknesses.

Since the Bichon Frise is a naturally obedient and attentive dog, training is often simple, however, it does require structure and work on the part of the both the puppy and the owner. Spending some time watching your Bichon Frise at play and interacting with people can give you some simple and easy strategies that can translate into training moments.

Initially, puppies will need a structured training environment that cues them that this is a time to learn and focus. After they master the command in the controlled training area, it is then time to start practicing where there is noise, distractions or in other words in the real world.



It is far easier to start training slowly and early than to wait until the Bichon Frise has developed bad habits before trying to train. As a small breed, one of the first bad habits that the Bichon Frise will naturally learn is to jump up on people for attention, or even worse, to bark or whine to get attention.

Teaching sit as one of the first commands can help prevent these habits from ever forming and thereby preventing you from having to correct and retrain.

## **TEACHING YOUR DOG TO COME**

Teaching your Bichon Frise to come on command is very important for a number of reasons. One reason is that a dog that will come is able to go out in public in a safe fashion and is also able to be off-leash in the yard or in a fenced dog park or off-leash area. Another reason is that a dog that will come on command has just learned his or her first command based on behavior that he or she will naturally do.

The first step to get the puppy to come is to understand the reasons that a puppy might not want to come. Perhaps they are really enjoying what they are doing or are engaged in chasing or playing with another pet or family member.

If the puppy is off the leash and having fun, it will quickly learn that when it is called to the owner and responds, the owner will put on the leash and take it away from the fun.

If the puppy does not respond, it gets to keep on playing and quickly realizes that being free is infinitely more pleasurable than being on the leash. To avoid this response, it is important to keep the puppy on the leash when out of the training area until training is completed.

The good news is that most Bichon Frise puppies find not a lot of activities more fun than being with their owners. Teaching the Bichon Frise the come command when you are feeding, when you come into the room, or when you want to take the puppy outside provides a greater reward than typically whatever else the puppy may have been involved in.

To teach the come command, follow these few simple steps:

1. Make sure that you have the puppy's attention in a quiet and distraction free environment. Do not have anyone else in the room with you or the puppy may become confused as to which person to go to.

2. As soon as the puppy looks your way say the puppies name and the word come.
3. If you wish to add a bit of incentive, have a favorite toy or a small treat in your hand and show it to the puppy.
4. Immediately reward the puppy when he or she arrives to you.

As the puppy becomes more alert and prepared, start adding extra things to the routine. Have more than one person in the room. Call the puppy from a different room or even try the command outside. Always make sure that the puppy hears his or her name as well as the command and be sure they can get to you when they are trying to follow the command.

If the puppy does not come to you, do not give chase. This teaches the puppy that you are willing to play a fun game with them if they don't come on command. If the puppy does not respond, walk away or ignore the puppy when it does return, then call again from a very short distance and immediately praise.

## **TEACHING YOUR DOG TO SIT**

Sitting is something that the Bichon Frise puppy will often do to look up at you, so take advantage of this behavior. It is important to realize that the small little Bichon Frise puppy may also want to jump up or put his or her front paws on your leg because you are so tall. Working on the sit command from a very early age will stop this from becoming a problem.

1. Whenever you notice your puppy getting into position to sit, simply say, "Sit". This allows the dog to understand that SIT means, "put my bottom down on the ground". Once the puppy understands this, training is much easier.
2. For structured training get down on the floor with the puppy, and hold the treat over its head, moving it slightly backwards. The puppy will raise its nose to the treat and move the head back, causing it to sit.
3. As soon as the back quarters start to lower, say "Sit" and present the treat when the dog's bottom is on the floor. This happens very quickly, so be prepared, as the little Bichon Frise's legs are not long and the distance to the floor is short.

4. Remember to give lots of praise for sitting and don't encourage the puppy to jump up on you for the praise or you have just undone all your work. Get down on the floor at the puppy's level whenever possible.

Never, ever push down on the hips or try to force the puppy into a sitting position. Not only is this frightening to the puppy, but you may damage the hips or spine if you press too hard or in particular areas on the spine and hips.

## **TEACHING YOUR DOG TO LAY DOWN**

The command of "down" can be taught very similarly to the sit command.

1. Have the dog sit, and then place the food, in your fingers, on the ground in front of the dog. This will usually encourage the puppy to lie on his stomach.
2. If they do not respond to this, or if they stand up, try gently moving the dogs front legs out while giving the command of "down".
3. Immediately reward the dog with food and praise.
4. The puppy will want to stand up immediately, and allow this until he gets the idea of laying down on the command.
5. Once he has mastered this, encourage the puppy to stay longer by petting the dog while it is down, as well as holding back the food reward for longer periods of time.

Again, be very careful with a small Bichon Frise puppy to not force him or her to lie down by either pulling out on the front legs or forcing the shoulders down. It may also be possible to catch the Bichon Frise puppy when he or she is laying down on his or her own, give the "Down" command and then go over and give some well deserved petting and maybe a stomach rub.

It is important to be careful when rubbing a dog's tummy, especially with breeds that may start to associate rolling over on their backs with the "down" command. You can use this tendency to teach the roll over or play dead trick later on.

## **TEACHING YOUR DOG TO STAY**

After the puppy has successfully learned to sit and lay down, it is important to get them to stay. This is a gradual training and will not happen overnight, as the puppy will naturally want to go with you, not remain behind.

1. Start by having the puppy calm and sitting or in a down position, whichever they are most comfortable with
2. Use a command that you choose such as "Stay" or "Wait" and maybe include a hand signal such as holding up your hand like a stop signal.
3. Move slightly away from your puppy but still within his or her clear line of vision. Start with just one step away and increase slowly and with success.
4. Reward the puppy when you step back to them at first, then start to add the come command to have the dog come to you.
5. Vary the time before the come command so the Bichon Frise doesn't think that the stay will just be for a few seconds.

Many Bichon Frise puppies have a hard time learning the stay command since they are dogs that naturally want to be with their owners. Often, obedience classes and dog trainers can really provide assistance to owner if the puppy just doesn't seem to want to stay.

## **WALKING WITH A LEASH**

The best way to prevent issues with a leash and collar is to not allow bad habits to form right from the start.

1. If you are using a collar with a Bichon Frise puppy, use a wide cotton type of collar that is the correct fit. You should be able to buckle or snap the collar and then slip at one or two fingers (depending on how large your fingers are) easily between the neck and the collar without it pulling tight on the neck.
2. Never use any type of correction collar including a choke style collar with a Bichon Frise as you can cause very serious and permanent damage to the windpipe and throat.
3. Many breeders and vets recommend using a harness for walking a Bichon Frise. The harness should fit properly and not be tight or

- rubbing in area on the puppy's body. Start by allowing the puppy to wear the harness around the house until he or she becomes comfortable before starting the leash training. Never leave the harness on when the puppy is unsupervised as it can pose a health risk should it restrict the puppy's movement or breath.
4. Start leash training in an area that is familiar to the Bichon Frise puppy and is not full of distractions and new things to see and smell.
  5. Start by having the puppy sit beside you. Use a "go" or "walk" command to get the puppy to move with your left leg. Give lots of praise when the puppy responds and moves forward. Treats can also help to reinforce the movement forward.
  6. Often the puppy will try to move in another direction and if the puppy does begin to pull in the other direction you just stop moving and do not start again until there is slack in the leash.
  7. Keep the puppy on a short leash when starting the training. Give lots of praise and keep the leash loose with no tension unless the puppy begins to pull. Avoid holding the leash taut or tight as this will cause pressure on the neck and confuse the puppy. Pressure should indicate something is wrong, not something is right.

It cannot be stressed enough that pulling or tugging on the collar or harness with the leash can cause serious health problems for the Bichon Frise. While they are typically easy to work with on the leash, they are also naturally curious and inquisitive and it will take time, patience and lots of practice to perfect heeling and on leash behaviors.

Use small treats as rewards and also keep leash training brief when first getting started. Avoid taking the puppy on long walks that will tire him or her out, remember they have short, little legs and will become fatigued rather easy when they are young.

## **OBEDIENCE TRAINING FOR COMPETITION**

Since the Bichon Frise is such a naturally intelligent dog that strives to please they make an ideal small breed for obedience type competitions. These events are designed to test the dog and owner's ability to work together in a variety of pre-set patterns. Obedience classes range from very basic on-leash competitions through to more advanced, off-leash levels that are really very challenging.

If you are interested in competitive obedience, it will be important to work with a trainer that can help you and your dog work together. In addition the Bichon Frise will have to learn to work in front of a crowd and around a lot of other dogs and distractions. This is an excellent opportunity to find a way to challenge your puppy or adult Bichon Frise both mentally as well as physically.

Obedience trials or events have the dog's competing against the correct form for completing the pattern, not directly against each other. The dog's ability to work with the handler as well as the correct way that he or she completes the commands and patterns is what is being judged.

Some events, especially those sponsored by the various Kennel Clubs will require that the dog be registered or given approval to compete if he or she is not a registered purebred. Some clubs or associations may allow mixed breed dogs or purebreds to compete, so be sure to check this out before entering.

## **TRAINING YOUR BICHON FRISE FOR THE SHOW RING**

While not requiring obedience training, registered, purebred Bichon Frise dogs that are being shown in the ring must be attentive, well mannered, and obedient to their handlers.

Typically, the dogs will be required to heel at a walk, jog and faster pace as well as stand and allow the judge to examine their teeth and, in males, examine the testicles to ensure they have both descended.

The dogs in the show ring are judged by the breed standard, which can be found on the Kennel Club website. Every major kennel club and association will have their own standard but most will be identical. Bichon Frise dogs will compete to see which dog in the class or competing group most closely physically and temperament wise matches the breed standard or ideal.

## **HOUSE TRAINING YOUR PUPPY OR DOG**

House training is perhaps one of the most challenging training issues that an owner of a Bichon Frise will have to deal with. One of the reasons that a Bichon Frise, like all small dogs, is challenging to housetrain is simply because its small size allows it to easily slip behind furniture, into a corner or even under a bed or in a closet to go to the bathroom. Once this pattern of behavior is established, it can be rather difficult to correct.

Starting housetraining with your Bichon Frise as soon as the puppy arrives home is the very best option. Most breeders, animal behavioralists and vets now recommend crate training as the most effective and most natural method to housetrain any breed of dog.

### **CRATE TRAINING**

The crate represents the den or home for the puppy, and since a Bichon Frise is a naturally very clean dog he or she will usually take great care to keep this area free from waste material. This behavior is actually taught to puppies by the mother when she teaches them to leave the litter area to relieve themselves even as puppies.

There are several benefits to crate training your puppy that will continue to be useful as your dog matures including a safe place for the dog to stay when you are away from the house for short periods of time and when you are traveling.

The Crates are often also used as a safe place for the dog to go when he or she is feeling stressed. Often, Bichon Frise adult dogs will choose to sleep in their crate at night if they are not allowed on the bed. If you have more than one Bichon Frise it will be important to have a crate for each one.

To get your Bichon Frise puppy familiar and happy inside the crate, it is important to start slowly and help your puppy understand that the crate is a safe place for him or her to go.

1. Find a quiet but not isolated area for the crate where the puppy will not feel as if it is being rejected or punished when he or she is in the crate. A quiet part of the living room, kitchen, or area of the house where people will typically be is the best option.
2. Place a few treats or a favorite toy in the crate and close the door with the puppy on the outside. He or she will soon want to be inside, and will whine or scratch at the door to get in.

3. Open the door and praise the puppy for wanting to get inside, but do not close the door or try to trap the puppy inside. If you do this the puppy will quickly become fearful of the crate and will not want to go back in if he or she feels confined.
4. Allow the puppy to come in or out of the crate as often as they would like. Only give verbal praise for going into the crate and just ignore the puppy for coming out. Never praise the puppy for leaving the crate as this is reinforcing the wrong behavior.
5. You may wish to throw a few more treats farther back in the crate to encourage the puppy to walk back in further and stay in the crate a bit longer. Again, do not encourage the puppy to come out, let him or her sleep in the crate or just play in there as long as they would like to
6. When the puppy is calm in the crate, start by shutting the door for short periods of time. If the puppy likes the crate you may notice that he or she does not even try to run out immediately when the door is open
7. Make the crate a positive place by always having a few treats and a favorite toy or chew bone in the crate.

Crates can also be used to keep the puppy in a safe place when you will only be gone for a few minutes. As puppies get older they can be left for longer times but remember that they will need to get out of the crate at regular times to avoid soiling in the crate and potentially developing bad habits with regards to going to the bathroom in the crate.

If the puppy does soil the crate during the introduction training, never punish the puppy as he or she may develop a fear of the crate. Simply remove the bedding, wash completely, remove all odors, and start over again.

Never, never use the crate as a "time out" or punishment area or the Bichon Frise will simply refuse to go into the crate, creating another problem and retraining requirement.

The crate can also be used to housetrain your Bichon Frise puppy. It is important for the puppy to first see the crate as his or her own place so make sure they are comfortable and see the crate as a good place to before starting the crate training routine.

Keep written records of when you notice your Bichon Frise puppy using the bathroom during the day. Typically, this will be after eating and drinking but may also be when the puppy wakes up from a nap or when he or she is playing or excited. For small Bichon Frise puppies, their bladders are very small and they may not have full control of all muscles so the time between



eating or drinking and going to the bathroom may be closer to five to ten minutes rather than the fifteen to twenty minutes more standard for larger breeds of dogs.

Once you understand the puppy's pattern, have the puppy comfortable with being in the crate it is time to put the two together:

1. Give the puppy his or her food according the schedule that you have been following.
2. Place the puppy into the crate as soon as he or she has finished eating or drinking. Make it positive, add a toy or two or a chew bone so they feel comfortable and not like they are being punished.
3. Using your log or journal, time one or two minutes less than when the puppy averages having to go to the bathroom and at that time take the puppy out of the crate and to the designated toilet area.
4. Stand there without playing with the puppy or giving him or her any type of attention or encouragement for about 2-5 minutes. If the puppy is not going to the bathroom or sniffing around like they are preparing too, simply pick them up and place them back in the crate.
5. Repeat the process in five minutes or less, depending on the actions of the puppy.
6. As soon as he or she goes to the bathroom in the right area give lots of praise and return the puppy to the house for some time out of the crate.

This process can be repeated just before the times that the puppy regularly goes to the bathroom, even if it is not directly at a feeding time.

Remember, do not punish the puppy if he or she makes a mistake or has an accident. This will not help in housetraining and will typically just confuse the puppy and possibly cause distrust and increased likelihood that the puppy will just become sneaky about where they are going to the bathroom.

Crate training should only be used if you are able to get to the puppy to allow them out when needed. If you are unable to be with the puppy at this time, crate training may not be the best method.

Avoid using crate training techniques if the puppy is vomiting or has diarrhea, or if they have any difficulty controlling their bowels or bladder. Check with a vet and get medical support before deciding if crate training is right for your puppy if it is having control problems.

## **PAPER TRAINING**

Paper training is often used in areas where the puppy cannot get outdoors because the owner lives in an apartment or area away from an outdoor space or when the puppy is being trained in areas where the weather is very cold or wet.

It is also often used when the puppy will not be housetrained to go outside but rather will be trained to use a particular area of the house as a toilet area. Often puppy pads or "wee" pads are used in the place of paper. Many small breed owners find this is easier and safer for their dogs and puppies especially if they don't have a fenced yard to allow the dog to go outside on their own.

Start by confining the puppy to an area of floor that is completely covered in paper. You want the puppy to associate the smell, sound, and texture of paper with going to the bathroom. Wire puppy cages or even puppy play pens can be ideal to confine the dog in. Always put the paper some type of plastic liner to prevent the smell from going into the flooring.

Gradually reduce the floor space in the area as the puppy begins to understand to only go on paper. This will often take a couple of weeks and it is very important to clean up all soiled paper as soon as possible to avoid the puppy tracking through the mess. In addition, keep in mind that any and all other papers elsewhere in the house will have to be kept off the floor both now and in the future.

## **LITTER BOX TRAINING**

This method is effective with small breeds of dogs, such as the Bichon Frise. Use the exact same style of training as with paper, just use litter instead of paper or litter on paper. As the puppy begins to associate the feel of litter with going to the bathroom, decrease the amount of litter on the floor and move it to one area. At this time, you can introduce a litter box.

The litter box should be shallow enough to allow the small Bichon Frise to easily step in and out. Since the puppy will not dig like a cat there is no concern with the litter spraying or being thrown out of the box as the puppy moves about. The box will need to be cleaned regularly to prevent tracking of the material on carpets and floors.

Some puppies may have allergic reactions to the dusts in some types of litters and some may not like the smell of the odor control litters so be aware of these issues as they may complicate housetraining.

If you do not wish to use both the crate training method and the litter box method, you can also keep the Bichon Frise puppy on a short leash where you can watch for any signs that they have to go to the bathroom and then immediately take the puppy to the litter box area and reward when the puppy behaves correctly.

## **TIPS FOR HOUSE TRAINING AN OLDER BICHON FRISE DOG**

Since the Bichon Frise is a smaller breed of dog, they may have paper trained; litter box trained or trained to go to the bathroom in a particular spot in their last home. The texture under the dog's feet is often key in getting them to understand where they are to go. Often dogs that are raised in the city and got used to relieving themselves on the sidewalk or on a driveway will have difficulty in learning to use a grassy area or gravel.

As with puppies, scheduling and planning is very important in house training a mature Bichon Frise. Start by taking the dog out to the toilet area no longer than 20 minutes after eating, sleeping or exercise. Praise the dog for using the correct area and avoid punishment for accidents. If the dog is bored, it may drink excessive amounts of water or may over eat if allowed free access to food that will mean a greater and more frequent need to get outdoors or to the toilet area if it is inside.

Consider scheduling meals at regular times and then taking the dog for a walk afterwards. It is important for any dog to have lots of fresh, clean water but you may want to remove water or limit the amount if they are drinking out of boredom. Try providing some toys or other distractions for the dog. Talk to your vet before restricting any water to the animal.

Often the biggest problem is that owners simply leave the dog or puppy alone too long. When this happens, the dog has no option but to go to the bathroom in the house. Often dogs are very upset by this and may become anxious and more nervous when left alone, which will only compound the problem. Consider having a friend or neighbor come in and walk the dog or just let it out in the yard if you are going to have to be away longer than usual.

Remember that old dogs, like puppies, may experience difficulty in controlling their body functions. Frequent trips outside or excessive drinking and urination may be the first conditions in such conditions as diabetes and kidney disease or failure. Since smaller breeds such as the Bichon Frise may be prone to these conditions, be sure to have this checked by your vet as soon as it is noted.

# 7

## MAINTENANCE OF A HEALTHY BICHON FRISE



### **GROOMING YOUR BICHON FRISE**

While the Bichon Frise does have an almost non-shedding coat, it does not have a non-maintenance coat. Keeping your Bichon Frise looking sparkling white and keeping the coat free from mats and tangles does take a regular grooming routine as well as time and effort on the part of the owner. Overall, the breed is considered to be very labor intensive to keep the dog looking his or her absolute best.

Some Bichon Frise owners will also learn how to clip their own dogs while others will take their dog or dogs to a professional groomer every month for a bath and a clip to keep them looking tiptop. Either option is fine; it is largely a factor of the owner's comfort in clipping as well as the time and supplies needed to complete this grooming routine. Clipping the Bichon Frise reduces the daily grooming requirements as well as gives the dog a whole new appearance.

Grooming the Bichon Frise should be a daily routine to avoid tangles and mats that can cause serious damage to the coat. The basic tools that you will need to use when grooming the Bichon Frise include:

- A stiff bristle brush of small or medium size
- A small sized pin brush
- A coarse toothed dog comb, often called a greyhound comb
- A slicker brush, again a small to medium size
- Blunt tweezers
- Blunt-ended dog grooming scissors
- Dog nail trimmers, guillotine or slotted blade
- Quickclot, Kwik-stop or other styptic powder to stop any bleeding if the quick is cut



Pin/Slicker brush – © Kamil Karpiel at istockphoto.com



stiff bristle brush



grooming rake

The Bichon Frise has a double coat. However, the outer, harsher and curlier hair does not develop and grow in until the puppy reaches about one year of age. Before that, the puppy has a uniformly soft coat that is all one variety of hair. Even with a puppy, it is important to start out with a daily grooming routine so he or she becomes very familiar and used to the process.

During the period of about a month before the Bichon Frise starts to get the outer coat, the puppy coat will start to mat and tangle much more as some of the puppy hair needs to be removed from the coat. This means that owners should be vigilant with grooming and some dogs at this age may need grooming more frequently than normal.

The non-shedding coat of the Bichon Frise does not mean that he or she does not lose hair; it simply means it does not just fall out all over the place like most other breeds. What actually happens is the hair of the Bichon Frise falls out or comes out during grooming and that grooming is absolutely essential to prevent the dead hair from simply remaining in the coat and matting into the live hair resulting in hopeless mats that typically have to be cut out to be removed.

To groom the Bichon Frise, it is a good idea to teach your puppy or dog to lie down on his or her side. Start by grooming the hair up and away from the skin rather than down on the skin to keep it full and puffy looking. You can start from the shoulders and work back or start from the rump and work forward.

Start with the pin brush to remove any tangles or mats. Work tangles from the ends farthest from the skin to closer into the skin. The tooth end of the greyhound comb can also be used like a hair pick to help detangle, but this needs to be done with caution as it can easily scratch the skin. Dog hair detanglers are available in many dog stores or only that are easy to use spray in products that helps the hair slide free and help to remove tangles.

Once the hair can be brushed easily with the pin brush on the side, comb though using the coarse toothed comb, followed by the slicker brush. The slicker brush can only be used when all the knots are out of the inner and outer coat or it will simply pull out clumps of hair leaving the coat looking uneven and thin in some areas.

Turn the dog over and repeat on the other side, taking care to not miss the hair along the stomach or the back. The neck and head need to be brushed with the bristle brush and the long hair on the ears needs to be carefully detangled to avoid any pain or irritation when brushing.

In addition to brushing, the Bichon Frise will need to have his or her nails examined and filed if any splinters or sharp areas are noted. This can be done with a simple emery board just like a person would use. Longer nails need to be trimmed with a guillotine style or slotted scissor type nail clipper with a sharp blade.

You should cut just below the pinkish looking quick on the nails at a 45-degree angle, leaving the nail flush with the surface of the ground. The hair between the toes should be removed with the blunt ended scissors once every week to avoid matting and tangles in this sensitive area. The hair around the feet can also be trimmed to avoid tracking mud and dirt into the house and ensuring that matting and tangling is not a problem.

Taking care of your Bichon Frise dog's teeth is also very important. At least twice a week, the teeth should be brushed using a doggy toothbrush or a finger sleeve and specially prepared dog toothpaste available at pet stores and veterinarian's offices.

Do not use human toothpaste, as this will definitely taste bad to the dog and make the next brushing more difficult. Remove all tartar or plaque from the gum line and teeth using the toothbrush or finger sleeve. Remember to brush both the inside and outside of the teeth.

## **BATHING**

Unlike many breeds of dogs, bathing does not affect the Bichon Frise coat nor does it cause skin damage provided that owners use the right methods and products. A Bichon Frise can be bathed once or twice a month and will actually have a healthier coat with a once a month bath, although with a very short clip, this frequent bathing may not be required. A lot of the frequency of bathing will have to do with the environment the dog is in, and how often it is outside and active - typically where most dirt and debris is found.

It is recommended by the Bichon Frise Club of America that the breed be routinely and completely bathed and clipped once a month, to keep the high

maintenance coat in tip top condition. When showing the Bichon Frise, dry powders can be used to prevent over-bathing if the dog is entered in many different competitions. There are several different whitening products on the market, either in dry form, or as shampoos that can be used to keep the coat looking clean, white and bright.

The following tips can help with bathing your Bichon Frise:

- Use a good quality dog shampoo designed for dogs with white coats. This will help the coat from becoming yellowish or dingy looking.
- Always use the best possible quality dog shampoo and conditioner, never use cheap or generic brands or human hair products, these will damage the skin and coat.
- Use a puppy or dog bathing stand or inset for the bathtub to give the dog non-skid footing and a sense of security.
- A shower wand or specialized wand for washing dogs is ideal for ensuring all soap residue is off the coat.
- Always rinse until you are 100% positive that all the soap and conditioner is off the hair and skin.
- Use lukewarm or tepid water, not hot or cold.
- Don't make bathing a game, dogs can easily slip and hurt themselves. Have the dog either stand or sit for the bath and then lift them out of the tub or basin to avoid any injury.

The biggest key to doing a bath right is to ALWAYS make sure that the Bichon Frise is completely groomed, and free from knots and tangles before wetting the coat. Wetting a Bichon Frise coat will cause knots and tangles to tighten, making brushing after the bath almost impossible without clipping.

To dry your Bichon Frise you can both groom and let air dry, or use a special pet hair dryer that only blows cool air. Hot hair dryers like the ones used by humans will burn the dog's sensitive skin.

Use only the pin brush and comb when drying the dog's hair or working with the wet dog. Never use the slicker brush except to finish off the coat after the dog is completely dry and tangle free.



## **TRIMMING**

As mentioned above, owners can often trim the feet of the Bichon Frise between trips to the groomer to keep the feet looking neat and tidy. In addition, the owner may need to clip or trim a small mat from the coat or trim a knot from between the pads of the feet. If you do be sure to use very sharp bladed blunt ended dog grooming scissors.

Since the Bichon Frise is a small breed with a relatively short coat when clipped, it is important to have a smaller size pair of scissors so you have greater control and less likelihood of cutting more hair than you needed.

In some cases, the Bichon Frise owner may choose to hand trim or scissor cut their dog rather than going to a professional groomer. Most groomers will use electric clippers for the body clip and just use scissors around the head and legs.

For advice on hand trimming, you can see a step-by-step guide at:

<http://home.att.ne.jp/gold/bichon/trimming.htm>

Some show dogs are completely scissored by hand and many breeders feel that this gives the best-looking coat for show purposes. Hand scissoring or trimming a fully-grown Bichon Frise will take a considerable amount of time and does require a groomer with Bichon Frise show presentation experience.

## **CLIPS AND STYLES FOR A BICHON FRISE**

One of the most common and most widely known clips or styles for a Bichon Frise is the pet cut. This is a cut that accentuates the natural lines of the dog but also gives a uniform length to the hair on the legs and body while leaving the hair on the tail and the head and ears long. The result is a very "powder puff" looking appearance with the head very round in shape and the body gently rounded as well.

8

The teddy bear cut is very similar although the hair on the face may be longer and slightly fuller in presentation but cut level or flat at the lower levels of the jaw. This is also sometimes called a lamb cut, in different areas.



There are definite types of cuts that are acceptable for a show quality Bichon Frise and a professional groomer should be consulted if you are planning to show. In addition, you may wish to bring in different pictures of the cut or clip you want to have completed with your Bichon Frise. Remember that the coat will need to be clipped every month to keep it looking crisp and defined.

## **EAR CARE FOR DOGS**

Since the Bichon Frise is a breed of dog that has drop type ears or ears that do hang down, they are more prone to getting ear infections and irritations than breeds of dogs that have erect or pricked ears. Moisture, wax and even debris can easily be trapped in the outer ear leading to infections, irritations and possible serious conditions if not corrected and removed.

Bichon Frise owners should check the inside of the dog's ears at least at every routine grooming which should be every other day at the least or ideally every day. This routine check only takes a second and is easy to incorporate when you are working on brushing the long hair on the ends of the ears.

Typical signs that there may be a problem developing in the ears of your Bichon Frise include:

- Repetitive and frequent shaking of the head
- Scratching the ears constantly
- Trying to rub the ears against people, furniture or even the carpet or outside on the ground.
- Bumps or lesions inside the outer ear or on the inside of the skin of the ear.
- Red or irritated skin inside the ear.
- Foul smelling discharge or waxy build-up that is visible in the ear

There are several different things that can cause these symptoms so the best idea is to have a vet check for ear mites, infections or yeast and bacterial problems in the ears before starting any treatments.

## **GENERAL EAR CARE**

One of the most important aspects of ear care that Bichon Frise owner's can easily do at home is to keep all the long hair plucked from the inside of the outer ear. This is a simple process that is not painful for the dog and can really help to prevent infections and other problems in this area of the ear.

To pluck the hairs from the ear, sprinkle a very small amount of ear powder or resin powder onto the long hairs in the ears. This allows you to actually grip the hair without your fingers simply sliding off. Pull the hair using a gentle upward and outward motion.

Don't jerk the hair or use sharp tweezers as this will simply cause the hair to break off and may cause more problems if it becomes irritated or infected. There are also rubberized "fingers" that can slide over the index finger and thumb, when used with the ear powder will make gripping the hairs easy and simple.

A wax remover or ear cleaner can be purchased from the vet and used to flush out the ears as needed when the dog is being bathed. Some Bichon Frise dogs just seem to have more of a tendency to have waxy build-up whereas others don't seem to have as many problems. If you do use an ear cleaner talk to your vet about which product is the best. You will also have to follow this with an ear drying solution if it is not contained in the ear flush.

If the ear has a dark or very greasy looking discharge, this can be the sign of a serious infection further into the ear canal. Never try to poke anything into

the ear canal, not even a Q-tip or other ear cleaning device. Immediately take your dog to the vet and he or she may do a deep ear cleaning and prescribe ear drops that contain antibiotics to clear up the infection.

Always dry out your Bichon Frise puppy or dog's ears after every bath. Water that is trapped in the warm, dark area of the ear is an ideal growth area for yeast and bacteria, leading to skin problems and infections in the ear. Drying can be done with a drying solution that is put on a cotton ball and gently swabbed through the ear or with a soft, dry cloth.

## **YEARLY CHECK-UPS**

During your dog's routine yearly check-ups, the vet should do a more in depth look at your Bichon Frise dog's ears if he or she notices anything unusual. Between these yearly check-ups, it is important to watch for any signs of irritation or discoloration of the ear or any increase in wax production in the ear.

The vet will also typically take a scraping of wax from the inside of the ear to check for microscopic ear mites that can also cause irritation in the ear canal and outer ear. These mites will be treated with drops that need to be put into the ear and massaged to cover the inner ear surface, eradicating the mites over the treatment period. Dogs and puppies can get ear mites through contact with other infected dogs and they are highly contagious between dogs.

## **TEARING**

Tearing is a common problem in most white coated dogs, as the stains from the tears leave a pink to reddish stain on the hair under and around the eyes. While tearing is distracting and annoying to the owner, it can also be a sign of health problems and eye conditions that need to be treated. Some of the common problems resulting in tearing include:

- **Genetic factors**  
These can make some puppies more prone to tearing than other dogs in the breed. Always carefully check the dam and sire, and ask about tearing in the lines.
- **Allergies to foods, environmental components and even to fleas**  
Treatment includes antihistamines, routine flea treatments for the dog, yard and living space and management of diet.
- **Irritation**  
This is due to hair and debris touching or rubbing the surface of the

eye. This can be corrected with hygiene, and careful trimming of the hair around the eyes.

- Entropion  
This is the medical term for a condition where the eyelashes turn inwards and rub against the cornea, causing pain and irritation. This condition can be corrected through a simple surgical procedure, that turns the eyelid outwards and tacks it in place until it heals.
- Infections  
These are due to red yeast, which leave the characteristic red stains on the face and also a bad odor. These bacterial and yeast infections will not go away on their own, and will require antibiotic treatment that can be prescribed by your vet.
- **Blocked tear ducts**  
These can prevent the moisture from the eye draining through the nasal passages. With blocked ducts, the excess moisture in the eye drains out the front of the eye, leaving the tear stain. A vet can prescribe drops to clear the block, or may need to surgically unblock the tear duct to provide proper drainage for the tears.
- **Teething**  
Puppies will often go through a period of tearing when their adult teeth are pushing out the baby teeth. This is typically temporary and will clear up when the additional pressure is off the nasal passages.

Removing tear stains can be part of the grooming routine after owners discover the cause of the problem. While you may need to provide eye drops or work with your vet on treating the underlying condition, there are some general tips that can help control tearing and the associated staining around the eyes.

- Frequently clean the hair around the eyes using a commercially available tear stain removal solution or dilute lemon juice and water. Salt water and even very dilute shampoo can also be used but always take caution to never get any type of solutions in the eye itself as this will cause more tearing and increase the problem.
- Home made remedies including hydrogen peroxide, corn starch, bleach and milk of magnesia are often used, but they can seriously injure the dog's eyes if mixed incorrectly. Breeders and vets recommend using the commercially available products rather than the home made mixtures.
- One teaspoon of vinegar added to your dog's drinking water can help prevent future tear stains. It may be challenging to get your dog to

drink this water so start with a few drops and gradually work up to a full teaspoon to desensitize the dog to the taste.

- Staining over the mouth area as well as the eyes may be an indication of minerals in the water that are causing the staining. Switch your dog to bottled water from a ceramic or glass drinking bowl and check to see if there is a decrease in the discoloration.

Never treat tear stains on your own without first consulting your vet to determine the underlying cause.

## **CLAW CLIPPING AND CARE FOR CANINES**

All dogs, regardless of their breed or size, will need to have their nails trimmed and kept at the correct length. Nails that are too long are a danger to the dogs as they can actually curl around and pierce through the pads or the sensitive skin between the pad as well as cut and seriously injure the dog when he or she is scratching. Nails that are too long will also result in painful movement for the dog often noted by limping or refusing to put any weight on one foot.

Unlike people, dogs don't have the ability to cut their own nails. In the wild, dog's nails were kept short by abrasion with rocks and rough surfaces and through natural activities such as digging. Modern dogs, kept in carpeted houses and walked on soft grass don't have the same opportunities to keep their nails naturally worn down.

Some Bichon Frise that are walked regularly on surfaces such as brick, gravel or pavement may be able to keep their own nails relatively short, but typically all will need a little bit of assistance in this area.

### **CLIPPING THE NAILS**

Clipping the nails of your Bichon Frise is very important to ensure that the dog does not develop painful pressure on the pads of the feet that may lead to limping and even more serious conditions. Typically, a Bichon Frise will need his or her nails cut twice a month, but each dog will have different growth rates, so it is important to check the length of the nails at least once a month.

The most recommended style of clipper is the guillotine style pet nail trimmer. For a Bichon Frise, the small size will be the best option as there is few chances for error using the right sized nail clipper. Basically the clipper works like a single hole punch for paper.



guillotine nail clippers

The nail is inserted in the loop at the proper level and horizontal with the pad and the handle is squeezed, sliding a very sharp blade across the nail and clipping it off flat to the ground. Since the Bichon Frise has very small nails, as long as the blade of the clipper is sharp, this is a very easy process that does not require a great deal of hand strength or pressure to slide the blade.

In addition, if the nails are regularly maintained you will just be nipping off the softer end, not actually cutting through the very thick nail that can develop if the dog is not regularly trimmed.

The key to being able to do the procedure yourself is to start when the puppy is young. Spend time handling and touching the Bichon Frise puppy's nails and feet so he or she is comfortable. The first few times you trim the nails, be very sure to have someone with you to help hold the dog or puppy as they can panic and try to pull away, just from the sound or operation of the clipper.

Always be very careful to stay well below the quick of the nail. This is seen as a pinkish area inside the nail, thicker at the joining of the nail to the pad and tapering to about halfway down the nail. It is sometimes easier to see from the bottom side of the nail so teaching your dog to lie down on his or her side for grooming and nail trimming can really help you see what you are doing.

The quick contains lot of blood vessels and nerve and will be very painful and often will bleed profusely if cut with either a clipper or an electric nail grinder.

If the quick does get nicked, immediately apply some styptic powder to clot the blood and prevent more bleeding. Stay calm and speak reassuringly to the dog, becoming agitated and hysterical will only lead to the increasing anxiety the dog will feel. If the toenail does not stop bleeding within a few minutes or stops and then starts again, contact your vet and you may be asked to bring the dog in so the vet can seal off the nail.

When a dog's quick is cut, he or she will naturally be much more nervous of grooming times especially when they see the clippers. Since Bichon Frise are so smart, they will quickly figure out what is going to happen next, so having someone with you and providing lots of treats and praise will be key to getting the dog back on track the next couple of grooming sessions.

After clipping the nails, follow up with filing to take off any sharp or jagged edges that may lead to the dog scratching his or her skin or splintering the nail. If you do notice there are a lot of rough edges the blade on the clipper needs to be sharpened immediately. Never use human nail clippers or flat blade scissors to trim the nail, as this will actually crush the Bichon Frise nails, resulting in pain for the dog and problems with the nails in the future.

## **DEWCLAWS**

Dewclaws are actually small toes that are located up from the feet on the legs. Dewclaws may become a real problem for Bichon Frise puppies as they mature, since they are often very loose on the leg and can catch on materials and pull and become irritated or even pose a hazard for being pulled off of the leg if they are snagged in something.

The Bichon Frise standard allows for the dewclaws to be removed and most breeders do so when the puppy is just a few days old. This is a very simple procedure typically done by a vet that removes the complete toe and claw when it is very tiny. This procedure done within the first week of life requires no stitching and typically will heal in just a few days.

Most breeders will sell Bichon Frise puppies with their dewclaws removed, as this is the simplest and easiest way to handle the procedure for the puppy.

The other opportune time to remove dewclaws is during the spaying or neutering process when the dog is sedated. By this time, the dewclaws are much larger and the leg will need to be bandaged and kept clean for a couple of weeks to allow the area to heal.

If the dewclaws are left on, it is critical to keep them trimmed and carefully examine the dewclaw for any signs of looseness, irritation, or swelling. Any



signs of these conditions should be discussed with a vet and a determination made to leave the dewclaws or remove them should be made at that time.

## **VACCINATION REGIMENS**

Probably one of the most loving things that you can do for your Bichon Frise is to ensure that he or she has all the required vaccinations within the stipulated timeframe. Most reputable breeder or dogs from rescues will be fully vaccinated and treated, but this does not mean that they are immune from disease if the vaccinations are not properly updated.

Unlike some vaccinations for people, dogs will need yearly boosters or subsequent shots to ensure they are protected from some of the most life threatening and highly contagious diseases that are found in both domestic and wild animal populations.

Dog owners that don't allow their dogs outside, or in direct contact with other dogs, should still follow all vaccination requirements. There is no way to guarantee your dog will not come into contact with a virus or bacteria that is air borne, found on other pet's fecal material, or even on a chew toy or object your dog picks up on an outing. In addition, other pets and animals besides dogs can carry some diseases.

A vet and your breeder will provide a vaccination schedule plus many vet's offices now mail out reminders or send emails or even text messages to remind owners of upcoming vaccination requirements.

Puppies will need a series of vaccinations that are usually at about 7, 10, 12 and 16 weeks, with not all vaccinations and boosters given at every visit. These vaccinations usually referred to as DHLPP, will include:

- Parvovirus
- Distemper
- Leptospirosis
- Parainfluenza
- Hepatitis

In some areas, the vet may also recommend additional vaccinations for conditions such as Lyme disease, carried by ticks, or Coronavirus that attacks the respiratory and digestive tracts of dogs and other mammals.

In addition, at about the six to eight month mark, puppies will also receive their first rabies shot. In areas where rabies is not a problem, the dog may not require this shot, but if you plan to travel with the dog, it is always a good extra precaution. The puppy may need an additional rabies booster and then typically will not need one again until the bi-annual shot at about 21/2 years of age.

For puppies or dogs that are kenneled or are around other dogs at shows or just in the community, there is an intranasal spray for bordetella, also known as kennel cough. For puppies or dogs that are constantly in contact with other dogs, it is usually recommended that this treatment be repeated twice year. Many good quality kennels and even shows will not let dogs enter or be boarded without proof of bordetella vaccination.

Vaccinations work by introducing a small amount of the small amount of the infectious material in altered or dead form into the dog's system. The dog then forms antibodies in his or her blood that will fight off the infection should the dog happen to come into contact with the virus or bacteria that causes the disease. Just like with humans, this does not mean that the dog may not become ill with the condition but it will usually not be significant to cause a serious illness or life threatening condition.

Puppies acquire natural immunity from the mother through the placenta while they are in the womb as well as through the mother's milk. It is very critical to start the vaccinations at the seventh week to avoid the puppies from having a gap in their immunity, possibly leading to serious health conditions and possible contraction of deadly viruses.

## **SIDE EFFECTS**

Unlike many of the smaller breeds of dogs, the Bichon Frise can be sensitive to regular vaccinations. In some dogs, the injection site may become irritated and red and may be sensitive to the touch for a few days after the shot. If the area appears to be highly irritated, looks infected or swollen, contact your vet by phone and he or she may require the dog come back in to have the area examined.

Many vets now recommend that the full series of shot be staggered rather than given all at once to a Bichon Frise to prevent these complications. The parvovirus shot should be given separately and at least two to three weeks after the other series of shots.

Do not put creams or lotions on the injection site, unless recommended by the vet. As with any type of medical procedure or drug therapy, there is always a chance that the puppy or dog could have a serious reaction.

Carefully monitor the first shot and report any abnormal behavior to the vet immediately.

It is normal for small puppies to be tired and a bit groggy after the first shot as their body is in overdrive trying to produce antibodies. If the puppy stops eating, refuses water or seems non-responsive or tired for more than a few hours after the shot immediately contact your vet.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The vet will always do a complete yearly exam or first exam on the dog or puppy before proceeding with the vaccinations. If he or she determines that the dog is sick, has an infection, or requires specialized treatment, the vet may opt to treat the existing condition before proceeding with the vaccinations. This will prevent adding stress to the body when the dog is already dealing with a health issue.

If dogs are poorly nourished, underweight or even extremely overweight the vet may also choose to delay the shots until the weight is within the appropriate range. Pregnant or soon to be bred Bichon Frise females will only be vaccinated under very specific conditions, so notify your vet if you have any reason to believe the female may be pregnant or if she is going to be bred.

Puppies cannot be vaccinated before a minimum age of six weeks and then this is typically only done if they are no longer able to nurse from the mother.

# 8

## MEDICAL CARE OF YOUR DOG



### **PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A CURE**

Taking the necessary steps to keeping your Bichon Frise as healthy as possible on a daily, weekly and monthly schedule will help both you and your vet keep a close eye on any health issues that may be developing in the Bichon Frise as he or she ages.

Just like people, early detection of most health conditions will greatly improve the chance of success in treatment and will ultimately ensure fewer long and short-term complications for the dog, family and vet to have to work on treating very advanced conditions. In addition, it will help to minimize the costs of vet treatment since the treatment will be less invasive, costly, and also potentially more dangerous to the dog.

Taking a bit of time every day, week, and month will really help to prevent serious issues from advancing to the extreme stages before they are

detected. Since the Bichon Frise does have several known and potentially life threatening conditions that occur within the breed owners should be aware of the symptoms and signs of these conditions and get their dog to the vet when symptoms first start appearing.

## **DAILY AND WEEKLY**

In daily and weekly monitoring, owners have the opportunity to watch for very subtle signs that their Bichon Frise may not be feeling well or may be developing health problems. As a small dog the Bichon Frise is strong, sturdy and can actually tolerate a higher than average amount of pain or discomfort before a less than observant owner would notice a problem. The first signs of health issues for Bichon Frise dogs or puppies will typically include:

- Sudden changes in the amount of food consumed or the amount of water that the dog is drinking. These changes will not be due to the weather getting warmer or the dog having a significant change in the amount of exercise he or she is getting. Often the first signs that owners will notice are a decrease in food consumption.
- Changes in the dog's behavior. A normally calm and playful Bichon Frise suddenly becomes whiny or constantly barks or growls and seems to not want to play or be active.
- Changes in the way that the dog moves. While it is only nature that senior Bichon Frise dogs will not move as smoothly as puppies or adults and may have some stiffness, extreme movement problems are often signs of other conditions such as arthritis, which may be effectively managed with drug therapies.
- Urination and defecation. Watch for signs of straining to urinate or more frequent urination and of course any signs of blood in the urine. In addition, check for constipation or diarrhea, as these are both signs of many dietary as well as health conditions. Both urinary and fecal production changes are serious, as they can lead to dehydration and other very long term health issues for the Bichon Frise.
- Check the skin and coat daily. The Bichon Frise is very prone to skin allergies, hot spots and infections so the skin will need regular checking to notice any emerging problems.
- The ears should be checked at least once a week for any signs of discharge, infection or signs of yeast or bacterial growth.
- The teeth should be properly brushed and cleaned on a weekly basis and ideally twice or more a week. Bichon Frise are very prone to dental problems that can lead to early tooth loss.

- Check the eyes for any signs of irritation leading to tearing or any signs of problems with vision or development of cloudiness in the eyes, especially in adult or senior dogs.

Many owners keep a record or checklist of these basic weekly or daily checks and this helps them to ensure that they haven't missed anything on the lists. If your Bichon Frise is showing signs of any of the categories above a quick trip to the vet for a check up is highly recommended as often this early detection can prevent the condition from becoming serious and possible life-threatening.

## **MONTHLY**

Monthly, more intensive and specific health checks are also essential with the breed. These checks and actions will also help with general maintenance such as flea treatments, heartworm medications and bathing and clipping to keep the coat in the best possible condition.

- Bathe and clip your Bichon Frise at least once a month using a good, high quality dog shampoo. For dogs with sensitive skin, there are oatmeal, aloe vera and other shampoos that will soothe and prevent irritation.
- Use a vet or breeder recommended flea treatment; usually a topical treatment is the most recommended option. If the flea treatment combines a heartworm medication, use caution as some Bichon Frise will have reactions to the PLUS variety of heartworm medications, so it is recommended to use an alternative brand.
- Although a veterinarian may require dental care, some owners may be able to do some basic scaling of the teeth at home. Talk to your vet to see if this would be appropriate and to learn the proper technique.
- Check the nails and ensure that there are no sharp edges or splinters and that the hair around the feet and between the pads is free from mats and is well clipped.
- Watch for any signs in overall personality with your Bichon Frise. They are typically a happy, playful, loving and kind dog and any changes in this behavior should be reported to your vet immediately.
- Treat for worms every 3-4 months or as recommended by your vet. For Bichon Frise that are in contact with other dogs and are outside more the lower time limits are usually recommended whereas Bichon

Frise dogs that are indoors and are not in contact with other dogs can often be wormed once or twice a year.

The best prevention is really a good relationship with both the breeder that you purchased the puppy from as well from your vet. There are several reference books or pamphlets, downloads and fact sheets on various Bichon Frise health conditions and diseases available online or at your breeders, however a vet that has worked with the breed is often your best resource.

## **DENTAL CARE**

Almost all small breeds of dogs, with the Bichon Frise being no exception, have problems with plaque build up and early tooth loss. There are many different reasons for this condition but typically the type of food that the Bichon Frise eats will have a great impact on his or her overall dental health.

Moist foods, such as canned or pouched, do not provide any abrasion to the teeth when the dog is eating, therefore they do not remove plaque or build up, allowing the sticky food to remain on the teeth. Just like with people, this is the leading cause of bacterial growth and gingivitis as well a gum disease and early tooth loss.

### **TEETH**

A puppy starts to get his or her teeth at three to four weeks and these will be lost as the puppy matures. At about four months, the 28 puppy teeth are replaced with the 42 permanent adult teeth. There are four basic types of adult teeth: the larger flatter teeth at the back of the mouth known as the molars, the premolars that hold food, the canines that are used for tearing and the incisors at the front of the mouth.

A Bichon Frise, when fully grown, should have all of his or her teeth and they should be in correct alignment in a scissors type bite. Teeth that are crooked or missing teeth contribute to poor dental health as they provide areas or pockets where bacteria can easily develop in the mouth.

Many Bichon Frise have a hereditary or genetic component to their tooth loss and may start to loose adult teeth by the age of seven. This can lead to problems with digestion as well as the need to carefully monitor and control food types to avoid inadvertently contributing to the problem. Regular dental care starting when the Bichon Frise is a puppy is highly recommended for this breed.

## **PROPER CARE OF CANINE TEETH**

Taking care of the teeth of a Bichon Frise is a part of the grooming routine that may happen daily or every other day. Daily brushing will often simply become a part of the routine, and once you and the dog become familiar with the process it only takes a few minutes.

Start with the dog or puppy in a sitting position and get him or her used to you touching the teeth with your finger. Lift up the lips and be sure to touch all the teeth, even the molars at the back. Also, remember that you will have to brush along the inside of the teeth, so have the puppy or dog become familiar with that.

Once they are comfortable with their mouths being handled, start using a specially designed, small sized dog toothbrush. If you cannot find one of these look online or use a soft bristled baby toothbrush. There are also specially designed dog toothpastes available that will help break down bacterial and plaque in the mouth with special enzymes. NEVER use human dental toothpastes or treatments on your dog.

For people with small fingers, there are finger sleeves that can be used to brush the teeth. These are very textured, rubber finger tip brushes that simply slide over the index finger. This is a great option as it provides the most control. If you have large fingers or the Bichon Frise is very small, consider using a specialty toothbrush for small dogs found at the pet store, online or at your vet's.

Other things to do to help reduce gingivitis or plaque build up:

- Feed only good quality, premium dry kibble
- Provide good quality, texturized chew toys that can help in the abrasive action. Rope toys are often very good even for dogs with loose teeth.
- Some treats and foods are now certified by the Veterinary Oral Health Council, so watch for the VOCH seal on containers.
- Avoid any type of toy or bone that may further damage the teeth by causing splinters.
- Provide raw meaty, safe bones that will not splinter or pose a choking hazard for the dog. Remove as soon as they become small or start to splinter.



## CONCERNS

The biggest concerns or issues for Bichon Frise owners to watch for when monitoring their dog's teeth and dental hygiene include:

- **Bad breath**  
This is most often the first sign of gingivitis but it can also indicate a digestive problem.
- **Tartar build up along the gum line**  
This can be a yellowish discoloration of the tooth where it joins the gums, but it can quickly go from yellow to brown or even black in several cases.
- **Loose teeth**  
A dog's teeth should be firm in the gums and will not wiggle or move with average pressure of brushing.
- **Red and irritated gums**  
Gingivitis will cause a distinct red line along the gums, which may bleed when the dog eats or while you are brushing.
- **Sagging gums**  
The gums may actually appear to pull away from the teeth. This is very serious as the gaps between the teeth and gums are often highly infected with bacteria.
- **Tooth loss**  
Often the owners that don't check their dog's teeth regularly may not even be aware that the dog has already lost teeth.

You should immediately contact your vet if you note any of the above concerns and schedule a visit. The vet or the vet's assistant will usually give a demonstration on how to brush your dog's teeth if you are not sure of the exact procedure.

## MEDICAL CARE

Knowing what to look for and be aware of is part of being a responsible Bichon Frise owner. The following summaries will provide the general information on common medical conditions found within the Bichon Frise breed. Some of these conditions are life threatening while others are not as

serious, however, all diseases and conditions are potentially damaging to your dog's overall health, so treatment is essential.

There are some genetic conditions within the Bichon Frise breed that may not develop or become noticeable until the dog is older, while some will be apparent from birth. Keep in touch with the breeder that you purchased the puppy from, and report any genetic health issues so he or she can be aware of the problem.

Although as an owner you may be aware of the condition and the causes, it is always the best possible option to take the dog to the vet for confirmation of the disease and condition. There are usually different treatment options available, so talking to your vet and determining which option will work best for you and the dog is important.

There are, for some minor and major health issues, holistic or natural treatments that may or may not be endorsed by a more traditionally trained veterinarian. Homemade treatments or remedies may also be common for some conditions, but please consider the potential risk to the pet if the diagnosis is incorrect or the treatment does not work.

## **EYE CONDITIONS**

Overall, the Bichon Frise has few eye problems compared to many of the other breeds of dogs. While there are some conditions of the eye that are largely hereditary and cannot be treated, most conditions that are caused by infections, irritations, and other diseases can be treated or managed very effectively with drugs, surgical procedures or a combination of both.

The following are common eye conditions noted in the Bichon Frise:

- **Cataracts**

The lenses of the eye become white or opaque and this leads to an eventual blindness. Cataracts can be caused by some drug treatments, by genetic conditions, diabetes, infections or by injury to the eye at an earlier time. Cataracts can be managed by some drug therapies and can also be surgically removed to restore sight. Cataracts have become more common in the breed since the 1970's largely due to the boom in the breeds popularity and the huge surge in backyard breeders and puppy mills that occurred at that time.

- **Tearing**

Tearing can occur for many different reasons in a Bichon Frise. These can include a blocked tear duct or conditions such as entropion where the eyelashes are actually scratching against the surface of the eye. Since tearing provides moisture to the hair it creates an ideal area for

bacteria and yeast to grow, leaving red or pink looking stains on the hair around the lower eye and down the muzzle. Talk to your vet if you notice any changes in tearing or the dog appears to be sensitive around the eyes or is scratching or rubbing his or her head.

- **Conjunctivitis**

A very common condition in all breeds of dogs it is also known as dry eye and is very common in breeds that are prone to allergies as the Bichon Frise is. Look for signs of redness, thick mucous or pus looking discharge from the eyes and itching or rubbing of the eyes. It can usually be cleared up with medicated drops but may cause significant damage to the eye if not treated.

## **EAR CONDITIONS**

The Bichon Frise, like all breeds of dogs with ears that fold over, is prone to ear infections due to the warm, moist environment in the ear. Ear infections are usually noted by a bad, waxy or yeasty smell in the ear as well as a discharge from the ear. This is particularly noticeable on the white coat of the Bichon Frise.

To prevent ear infections always:

- Flush out the ears using a commercially available ear solution from your vet or pet store at least once a month.
- Follow the cleaning with an ear drying solution to remove any excess moisture from the ear.
- Remove all long hairs from the ear by plucking them on a regular basis, ideally once a month or more frequently.
- Dry the ears thoroughly after bathing using an ear drying solution or soft cloth. Never use the pet hair dryer on the inner ear area.
- If the Bichon Frise becomes wet outdoors, be sure to carefully check the ear and dry if necessary.
- Take the dog to the vet if any signs of ear infections including repetitive scratching, rubbing the ears along the ground, or repetitively shaking the head is notice.

Ear infections may be deep in the ear where they are not visible and only the vet should examine this area. Do not insert a cleaner, solution, or any other liquid or object into the inner ear.

Ear mites can also be a problem and the vet can check for these tiny parasites and prescribe a simple treatment of ear drops to end the problem.

## **LUXATING PATELLA**

A very common condition in most breeds of dogs, luxating patella is also known as dislocated kneecaps or slipped stifles. In some journals and articles, it is also referred to as Patellar Luxation. This is a genetic condition that is inherited from the parents and can only be prevented by breeding lines that are not prone to the condition.

Females and dogs under 12 pounds are at the highest risk for luxating patella and the Bichon Frise breed does have a significant percentage of dogs exhibiting this condition. It is not life threatening and can be corrected surgically, if it is a significant problem.

Dogs can be checked for the condition after they are one year of age and may be given several designations including normal, mild or severe. This is rated on a scale from 0-4 (or sometimes 5) with 0 indicating normal kneecap development and 4 (or 5) being significant patellar luxation.

Owners may first notice that the Bichon Frise young adult dog or older adult seems to have stiffness in the rear legs, either one or both, as well as inability to fully straighten the rear legs. A hopping gait may develop as the dog tries to accommodate for the stiffness in the knee. Since the bone is not sitting properly in the knee there will be wear on the joint, resulting in the development of arthritis, which is far more debilitating.

Early detection and monitoring of the condition as well as surgical correction when needed is the best management of this condition. Any dogs with the condition should be spayed or neutered to prevent passing on the condition to offspring.

## **SKIN TAGS**

Skin tags may also be called fibropapillomas, skin polyps or fibrin tags. They are characterized by small or larger bumps or growths, usually found around the mouth and muzzle area. Sometimes, these growths seem to hang from the lips and may have thin out growths noticeable.

These skin tags often are very worrisome for Bichon Frise owners, as they do look much worse than they actually are. In most cases, they are benign growths and are not cancerous or dangerous to the dog's health. It is

important to have the growth carefully checked by a vet to determine if, in rare cases, it may be a cancerous tumor.

These skin tags will often appear and disappear on their own, however, if they are large or unsightly it is possible to have the bump or growth surgically removed. This is a relatively simple procedure, usually will not require stitches, and may be done under local anesthesia.

## **KARTAGENER'S SYNDROME**

Kartagener's Syndrome or immotile cilia syndrome is a relatively uncommon, inherited disease in the Bichon Frise breed that causes symptoms very similar to an allergic reaction or an upper respiratory infection such as kennel cough. Owners may notice the dog is coughing, seems to have a discharge from the nose that comes and goes, appears to have problems breathing, or may cough off and on over a long period of time.

These symptoms may be chronic or may be more prevalent at certain times of the year, which further leads to the assumption that this may be an allergic reaction.

If your Bichon Frise is being treated for allergies and the condition does not seem to get any better or if the breeder indicates there has been a history of immotile cilia syndrome in the line, you will need to seek out a specialist that has treated this condition. Typical treatments include some drug therapies to control any infections that may develop as well as additional nutrients to help the body stay healthy.

## **SKIN ALLERGIES**

Unlike Kartagener's Syndrome discussed above, skin allergies are very much a reality for many Bichon Frise dogs. Any breed of dog can have skin allergies, but typically, in breeds that are white in coloration the condition is much more prevalent, possibly indicating a strong genetic component.

Typically items that cause allergies in the Bichon Frise dog are either contact related such as foods and items your dog may come into contact with such as cleaning compounds, perfumes, fabric treatments, preservatives or ingredients in food, or inhalants or air-borne allergens such as mould, pollen, dust and even chemicals in the air.

The signs that your dog may be having an allergic reaction include:

- Licking and biting, especially at the feet
- Rubbing of the face, ears and eyes

- Chewing at the body
- Hot spots caused by infections or bacterial grows at various spots on the body
- Coughing and sneezing
- Excessive tearing
- Lack of energy

Each one of these symptoms, or even several in combination, can also be part of other conditions, so it is very important to have your vet check out the dog completely to rule out any possible other health conditions. Often, allergies will become worse if the dog is unhealthy or may have another condition.

There are specific test that the vet can complete to check for types of allergens that may be problematic for your Bichon Frise. Even with the tests, it is still important to start a good allergy management problem to minimize the impact of allergens when the dog comes into contact. For some allergens, especially the air-borne variety, it will be almost impossible to completely restrict your dog from coming into contact with these particles.

To start controlling the allergies or managing the dog start by:

- Eliminate foods that contain any type of preservatives or additives. This may mean cooking for your dog to allow the dog to become allergy free. Gradually add things back into the dog's diet and see if you can determine what is causing the reaction. This should be done in close consultation with your vet and only if the allergen is a food related problem. Do not feed canned or semi-moist foods at this time as they have the highest amount of chemicals and preservatives. Your vet may recommend a particular brand that is low in these compounds at a later time when the allergy has been identified.
- Use only non-allergenic shampoos and coat treatments with your dog. Avoid any commercial products that are scented or have additional chemicals. Whitening shampoos or shampoos that contain bluing may be a problem at this time so talk to your vet. Do not bathe the dog too frequently at this time, talk to your vet about what a reasonable bathing schedule should be.
- Do not use any spray on or leave in hair conditions or coat products. These can be very irritating to the skin as it is trying to heal from the scratching or irritation.

- Use a tea tree oil spray to stop the dog from chewing, liking or biting at any areas of the body.
- Control all fleas in the environment, on the Bichon Frise and on any other dogs or pets in the house. Flea allergies can be very problematic in the breed and can only be controlled by total elimination (or as much as possible) of fleas in the area. A monthly topical application as well as spraying the house and yard is usually recommended.
- Be careful when using flea products in combination, as there is the potential for toxicity. Talk to your vet and follow the instructions on the labels very closely. Do not combine topical monthly applications with other flea treatments for the dog unless specifically instructed to do so by a vet.
- Treat hot spots or moist, irritated areas using a vet prescribed liquid or hydrogen peroxide applied two or more times a day until it begins to dry. Do not use creams or lotions that keep the area moist.

In addition to managing the environment in some cases, it may be necessary to treat the dog with regular doses of antihistamines either in pill or injection form. There are now long acting injections that will help control allergies for several weeks that can be prescribed and given by your vet.

Pills can be administered on a daily basis as required but will take time to be fully effective. Watching your dog's reactions to any allergy medication is very important to note and respond to any side effects or negative responses you may notice.

Bichon Frise owners should be very aware that many of the treatments for allergies are steroid based. These steroids, when used over long periods of time or repeatedly used for short periods of time over several years, can cause a disease known as Cushing's Syndrome. This condition is caused when the body has increased levels of cortisol, the steroid found in the allergy shots.

As the dog ages, he or she will have less ability to regulate the cortisol in the blood since the levels have been regularly elevated by the steroids. This condition is treatable with medications; however, it can be prevented or minimized by only very short-term steroid use for allergies followed by regular antihistamine medications for control.

## **EPILEPSY**

Epilepsy in dogs is very similar to epilepsy in humans; it is a neurologically based seizure disorder. Typically, it is not seen until the dog is between two and five years old although it may be present when the Bichon Frise is a puppy in some cases. It may be very mild and may only be noticed as the dog seems to stare off into space for a few seconds, even when right in the middle of a game or activity.

In severe cases the dog may fall down, seem to paddle his or her legs, arch the neck and have body spasms and tremors. Although frightening to watch, it is not life threatening and can be treated with anti-seizure medications that are in pill form.

## **WHITE SHAKER DISEASE**

Not as profound as the moderate to severe cases of epilepsy, White Shaker Disease is found in most predominantly white breeds of dogs and is a neurological disorder. It can develop in puppies or adults and is seen as slight to extreme shaking over the body that gets more intense as the dog gets tired, excited or agitated.

Typically, the condition can be controlled with corticosteroid treatment for two to three months that will clear up the condition. In some dogs with severe symptoms the treatment may need to continue throughout their lives. White Shaker Disease is not considered to be life threatening, unless other complications are also noted.

## **BLADDER STONES AND URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS**

Bladder stones and urinary tract problems are very common in small breeds of dogs. These typically develop due to improper diets or genetic conditions and while not preventable in some cases can be managed. In some cases Bichon Frise dogs that are crated for too long and not provided enough activity and access to drinking water or that are forced to hold their urine for long periods of time will develop bladder stones.

Typical symptoms of bladder stones or urinary tract infections include straining to urinate but not producing any urine, foul smelling or thick urine, blood in the urine or whiny or not trying to urinate because it is painful.



Ensuring that the dog has lots of exercise, access to as much fresh, clean water as he or she wants as well as having lots of frequent, regular trips outdoors is absolutely critical to prevent this condition. Using only foods recommended to the vet that are low in certain preservatives and contain compounds that can break down existing stones is highly recommended. Antibiotics will also be prescribed to deal with any infection that may be present.

In extreme cases, the vet may surgically remove the bladder stones if they are lodged in the urinary tract or are too large to either break down or pass out of the system through urination.

## **ANAL GLANDS**

Anal glands are two small, mucous producing glands located on the lower bottom sides of the anus. They can become impacted, causing pain for the dog that will then "scoot" or drag their bottom across the ground to try to relieve the pressure. Anal glands can rupture if not drained when impacted, so this is important to monitor.

Anal glands can be emptied by your groomer, the vet or yourself. Gentle pressure is applied to the outside of the gland that will cause the pressure to be relieved by forcing the gland to empty.

## **SPAYING AND NEUTERING YOUR DOG**

There are many reasons to spay and neuter your Bichon Frise at the earliest possible time. Just a few of the many reasons include:

- Eliminating pregnancies and unwanted or unplanned for puppies
- Preventing the negative habits associated with hormonally driven behaviors such as male aggressiveness, marking and sexualized behaviors and female in heat behaviors
- Eliminating the risk or reproductive system cancers in both sexes
- Allows you the comfort of being able to take your male or female dog around other dogs at any time
- Decreases roaming behaviors in both males and females
- Prevents pyometra in females which is a potentially fatal infection of the uterus

- Spaying or neutering your Bichon Frise does not cause the dog to:
- Become fat or lazy
- Become unsocial or distant from owners or other dogs
- Miss his or her sexually driven behaviors
- Develop different than intact males or females
- Prevent them from being happy and content dogs
- Decrease their energy levels

Spaying and neutering is recommended for any dog that is not being used in an active, responsible breeding program by an owner that is genuinely interested in bettering the breed and taking care of the dog.

### **WHEN TO SPAY OR NEUTER**

Basically, spaying or neutering can be done at any time after three months of age. Many vets and breeders now recommend earlier spaying and neutering rather than later. Historically, owners have been directed to wait until six to eight months to have their dog spayed or neutered but new research indicates that once the females have had their first heat cycle they are at greater risk for certain health conditions so earlier spaying is much better.

In addition, the first estrus or heat cycle can often be almost unnoticed by the owners that may still have intact male puppies in with the females. Breeding at this young age is very unhealthy, especially for the female that is not fully matured herself. If the female is going to be left intact for breeding, isolation from intact males should be done very early to prevent the risk of unplanned pregnancies.

Males will start to engage in sexual type behaviors at about four to six months of age, so preventing any of these behaviors from becoming habits is critical. Early neutering will do just that. Marking and mounting are two issues that are problematic for most small breeds with the Bichon Frise no exception.

# 9

## MANAGEMENT OF COMMON BICHON FRISE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS



### **CONTROLLING UNNECESSARY BARKING**

There are really two factors that make controlling barking in dogs a challenge. The first and most obvious factors is that most people want their dog to bark to alert them to people arriving and things that are going on in the environment; and the second is that people automatically give attention to a barking dog either by touching them or talking to them to get them to stop. In this way owners keep reinforcing the barking behavior even in their efforts to correct the problem.

The Bichon Frise breed is not typically known as a yappy or barking breed, which is somewhat uncommon in the smaller breeds. Starting with your Bichon Frise puppy, to reward for a couple of barks and then silence is really the best option as it is much easier to not allow the problem to get started than to have to correct the problem should it get worse.

## **PUNISHMENT**

Punishment, as indicated above, rarely works in correction of the problem. Since punishment will provide attention, even though it is negative, it will reinforce the behavior or barking. A much more effective method is to ignore the dog or try to catch the dog not barking and then provide a distraction.

## **TRAINING**

Often training the dog to bark will help in preventing barking from becoming a problem. This is a simple technique that you can use by just watching the dog's natural response to a stimulus.

When your Bichon Frise runs to the door when the mailperson arrives, simply say "Bark" and allow the dog to bark two or three times, then say "Stop" and immediately when the dog looks your way and is not barking, provide a reward as either a treat or a favorite toy. This will distract the dog and get their mind momentarily off barking. Some owners add the sit command at this time, so the dog learns to sit and stay when you open the door rather than trying to dash out to see who is there.

For Bichon Frise dogs that have already developed the habit, it is important to have them respond to another command and then reward them for that rather than trying to stop them from barking using other means. In cases where the dog simply will not attend to you a small spray bottle filled with clean water can be used to spray the dogs muzzle to get him or her to stop and then immediately give a command and praise the dog for responding properly.

## **JUMPING**

Since a Bichon Frise is such a small breed jumping is more of an annoyance than a safety hazard with these dogs. Jumping up on people is sometimes even encouraged by owners, although it is important to keep in mind that not everyone like a dog jumping up on them - plus the dog can not tell when you have your good clothes on and they are not to jump.

Jumping can best be corrected by teaching the sit command whenever the dog is waiting for attention or wants to be petted. If the puppy or dog jumps up, say "No jump" and step away, ignoring the dog or puppy. When he or she approaches, give the sit command and immediately provide attention. In this method, the dog or puppy learns that to get attention he or she must sit, jumping will only result in being ignored.

If you are trying to work on jumping, it is absolutely critical that everyone that works with the dog enforces the same rules. Bichon Frise are very intelligent and will quickly learn which people in the house will allow them to get away with things and which ones won't. Consistency is always important in any training programs.

Avoid using general words such as "no" rather be very specific. The Bichon Frise has an amazing ability to learn a much wider range of verbal commands than many breeds so take advantage of this.

For example, if the puppy was called and came running up to you and jumped up and was verbally corrected with a loud "no," he or she may not realize what you are correcting for is the jumping, not the correct response of coming. If you see the dog is about to jump, give the sit command or bend down and provide attention to prevent the jumping from happening. Reward for the correct response to the "come" command.

## **BITING AND NIPPING**

The Bichon Frise is not a breed known for biting or snapping and they are not a herding dog so nipping is only very rarely a problem. To understand why a Bichon Frise may develop a habit with biting or snapping, consider the following:

- Biting and mouthing is a form of understanding the world, especially for puppies.
- Biting is a self-defense tactic if the dog is feeling threatened or afraid
- Biting to humans may be playful to a dog or puppy that has not learned bite inhibition or was removed from the mother and litter before this lesson was learned.
- Snapping is a way of saying, "Leave me alone" and may be caused by teasing or provoking the dog.

## **TRAINING A PUPPY**

Puppies will all go through a stage, especially when they are under about three months of age, where they use mouthing or taking things into their mouth as a way to figure out their surroundings. If puppies are allowed to chew on anything and everything or are even encouraged to nibble on fingers, it is likely that these puppies will continue this behavior, even as adult dogs.

To train puppies not to bite, use the same methods that the mother and littermates would use. If the puppy bites simply say "No Bite" in a higher pitched voice, don't yell but speak firmly, and walk away. Soon, the puppy will learn that if he or she bites they will get no attention. In addition, you can have a chew available and give this to the puppy when he or she next approaches. In this way, they understand that you will play with them and they can bite the toy but you will not play with them if they bite you.

Usually puppies that are well socialized do not bite, so socialization is also key.

## **TRAINING OLDER DOGS**

Older dogs tend to bite because they are either protecting their possessions, feel threatened or are trying to get away or be left alone. Very rarely does an adult Bichon Frise become aggressive, unless they have been poorly socialized or abused and biting can often indicate that they are in pain or not feeling well. If you notice your adult Bichon Frise has suddenly started to bite or nip if you touch or pick him or her up, immediately get the dog to the vet.

If the Bichon Frise has become possessive of his or her toys, immediately remove them from the area. The dog has to remember that you are the "top dog," so giving out the toys only when the dog is behaving appropriately will reinforce this without the need for any type of punishment. If the dog is acting possessive, it is very important to not allow the children to play with the toys and the dog at this time to prevent any type of bite or accident.

Usually, Bichon Frise dogs are not aggressive and biting is not typically a problem. In some lines that have been indiscriminately bred by individuals that did not take into consideration the temperament of the mother and father there is a greater likelihood of biting or snapping behaviors. Timid or dominant Bichon Frise dogs are more likely to be involved in this type of behavior. Working with an obedience trainer or animal behavioralist can often correct the problem.

## **SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Since the Bichon Frise is a very people oriented dog, separation anxiety can be a very serious issue. If you are an individual or your family that will be away more than you are home, it is really important to understand that a Bichon Frise is not the breed to suit your lifestyle, no matter how much you love and want a Bichon Frise.

A Bichon Frise is a very adaptable dog and can tolerate moderate amounts of time alone, but training on this is important from an early age. Start by leaving the puppy alone, even just in another room, for a few minutes at a time, gradually increasing the time alone as the puppy is comfortable.

Always provide a few treats and lots of toys for the puppy to keep his or herself busy. Avoid leaving the puppy alone for long periods of time; perhaps consider leaving them with a neighbor or friend or having someone drop into visit so the puppy does not develop an anxiety about being alone.

In cases of separation anxiety, it is not that the dog begins to use destructive behaviors such as chewing or barking because they are bored, they are truly distraught about being separated from their owner. Since the Bichon Frise does not bond with just one person, typically as long as someone is present the separation anxiety will not be obvious.

If the dog engages in chewing and barking only when the owner is not home and appears nervous, pants excessively, begins to chew or hurt itself, appears extremely agitated by behaviors such as running through the house, salivating excessively or even behaviors such as obsessive tail chasing, this is likely an extreme anxiety response.

Work with your vet on medications that can control the anxiety as well as start gradually desensitizing the dog to being left along, just as you would if he or she is a puppy. A professional trainer or animal behavioralist can also be used to help you plan and manage these training sessions right in your own home with the dog.

## **CHEWING AND TEETHING**

Chewing and teething is absolutely normal in all puppies. As mentioned earlier, mouthing is a way that puppies, like human babies, learn about objects in their world. By providing the Bichon Frise puppy with lots of "good" things to chew on, he or she is less likely to start chewing on your shoes, remote controls, cell phones, pillows and other objects in the room.

### **PUPPIES AND CHEWING**

Bichon Frise puppies will have their first set of puppy teeth at about the four week stage. At this time, they are very interested in trying out their new teeth and chewing is most often the biggest issue as they mature they will usually stop this behavior after their adult teeth come in at approximately 14-16 weeks.

During this time, sore gums will lead to another increase in chewing so consider providing some raw, meaty bones or nylon chew toys, some which can even be frozen to provide additional comfort for the puppies irritated gums.

Punishing a puppy for chewing is very ineffective. What is much more effective is replacing the bad chewing item with a good chewing toy and then rewarding. When you catch the puppy chewing on your shoe, say "No Chew" and immediately provide a dog toy that you know that the puppy likes. When he or she takes the toy, provide a lot of praise and attention.

In addition, it is also important to not tempt fate with puppies. Remove anything that looks like it might be fun to chew. This means anything small enough to fit in the puppy's mouth in whole or in part. Confining the puppy to a small area of the house or a room or using a puppy pen or crate when you are not able to supervise the puppy makes this task a lot easier.

Typically, most Bichon Frise dogs are not problem chewers unless they are bored or are having anxiety problems. A few chew toys, hard rubber balls of the right size and even a rope toy will be ideal to keep them entertained and busy when you leave.

Be careful about unsafe objects that may pose a choking hazard as well as electrical cords, outlets or even cords or tassels that may be on drapery or furniture. Anything that may move or catch the puppy's attention is a target for investigation and possible chewing. Remember that a Bichon Frise is a small little puppy that can easily get under furniture or behind furniture, so watch for those places as well.

There are several commercially available sprays that can be used to deter chewing on larger objects such as furniture legs or other heavier objects. Always test these products before spraying them in the house.

## **EATING RELATED PROBLEMS**

The good news is that most eating problems in Bichon Frise dogs are diet related problems that can easily be corrected; however, the bad news is that many owners simply choose not to do so. Unfortunately, many Bichon Frise owners see their Bichon Frise as a member of the human family, rather as a dog that is a very important part of the human family.

Dogs cannot and should not eat the same types of foods that people do and definitely should not be eating foods that are prepared for the table. This is because most foods that we as humans eat are full of high levels of fats, processed grains, salts, sugars and other preservatives that can damage the Bichon Frise's teeth, cause allergies, and lead to obesity.



Being rather strict on what you feed your Bichon Frise is a good habit to develop from the start of the puppy's or dog's life with you. If you want to prepare food for your dog, consider putting your dog on the BARF or bones and raw food diet or consider making your own healthy dog treats right at home.

Some owners also make their own dog food using fresh meats, whole grains, vegetables, and supplements that can be purchased through your vet or pet store. If you are making your own diet, be sure to discuss the nutritional balance of the diet with your vet and closely monitor your dog for any signs of nutritional deficiencies or problems.

## **FOOD**

Although canned foods and semi-moist pouches are the most appealing to many owners, and of course dogs as well, they are often the least favored by animal health specialists. Small dogs are often known for becoming finicky eaters, usually because they are somewhat protected by their owners. Keeping your Bichon Frise on a good, high quality premium small dog size kibble throughout their life is the most recommended feeding program.

Premium kibble should have between 21 and 26 percent protein, depending on the age and condition of your dog. If your Bichon Frise is pregnant, has diabetes, food allergies, or is obese or ill your vet may recommend a different type of food for either short or long term feeding. Work with your vet, as well as the breeder, to find foods that are ideal for your Bichon Frise.

## **DENTAL PROBLEMS**

As discussed earlier, dental problems can be significant in the Bichon Frise breed. Missing teeth can cause inappropriate chewing of the food leading to digestive and elimination problems, most particularly constipation. Keeping the teeth in the best possible condition and regularly brushing and checking the teeth are essential. Once dogs start to lose their teeth, it may be necessary to start to pre-soak the kibble in warm water or non-sodium chicken or beef stock to ensure that it is palatable and chewable for the dog.

If the Bichon Frise is not eating, has a blood in the saliva or around the teeth after eating, a trip to the vet should be scheduled as quickly as possible. This is usually an early sign of gingivitis that, if not cleared up, will lead to tooth loss. Scaling of the teeth may be required if the tartar or plaque build up is significant, then the owner can start the Bichon Frise on a regular home tooth brushing and dental care routine.

## **LACK OF EXERCISE**

Dogs, like humans, will have a better appetite and be willing to eat if they are hungry. Also like humans, exercise will increase a dog's metabolic rate and will result in better functioning of the body, leading to better eating patterns.

Since the Bichon Frise is a fairly active dog indoors, they will usually keep themselves minimally exercised, however they can always use more. Unless your dog has a joint or movement problem or is sick, he or she will be healthier, happier and have fewer eating problems with at least one and preferably two 20-30 minute exercise opportunities per day.

This can be as simple as a walk or jog or running and playing in the back yard. Fetching is also a great way for the dog to get exercise as well as work on obedience and some one-on-one time with the owner.

## **PICA**

Pica is a medical term for the eating of non-food items. Some dogs will do this out of boredom while other will only engage in this type of behavior when they are lacking something in their diet. Eating grass or vegetation is not pica, this is a natural source of fiber and nutrients for dogs so don't be alarmed. If you are concerned about your Bichon Frise's eating behaviors or you believe that he or she is deficient in their diet and is eating or chewing for this reason, consult with your vet before starting any supplements.

## **REFUSING TO EAT VERSUS FINICKY EATERS**

Typically, a Bichon Frise that has been fed on canned or semi-moist foods that is being switched to a kibble diet or other feeding program will go through a period of refusing to eat. Although it may seem tempting to help your dog through this with a few snacks or treats, be firm and simply place the kibble down for 30 minutes at the regular feeding time and remove it when the time is up, even if the dog or puppy has not eaten.

The alternative is to gradually mix the new food with the old starting with  $\frac{1}{4}$  new to  $\frac{3}{4}$  old for one week, then switch to  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ , followed by  $\frac{1}{4}$  old and  $\frac{3}{4}$  new until the fourth week the dog is switched to 100% of the new food.

If you are not changing foods and the dog has suddenly stopped eating, check to make sure that he or she is not getting food somewhere else. A small Bichon Frise puppy can easily fill up on treats, so very carefully monitor how many he or she is getting in training programs and just as rewards. The

amount of food given as treats should never exceed 5% of the total food portion for the day.

If the dog does not eat for 2 meals and shows no interest in treats at all, immediately contact the vet, as this may be one of the first signs of a very serious health condition. If you notice any signs of vomiting or attempting to vomit or straining to go to the bathroom make an emergency call.

Finicky eaters will usually have to get fairly hungry before they decide to eat food that they don't really want. If the dog is very interested in treats and just seems to be rejecting the food, monitor carefully, consult with your vet and harden your heart to those begging behaviors.

## **COPROPHAGIA**

Coprophagia is the medical term for eating feces. Dogs may routinely engage in this behavior for several reasons, some which are habit related and some that are health related. It is very important to consult with your vet if you notice this behavior either occasionally or chronically in your Bichon Frise as it can be a warning of serious nutritional deficiencies in the diet.

Dogs may engage in coprophagia because of:

- Boredom
- Hunger
- Being kept in soiled or dirty conditions
- Certain types of medications
- Diseases such as Cushing's disease

Puppies will typically eat feces as part of their natural behavior and the mother dog will also engage in coprophagia to keep the whelping box clean, especially before the puppies can move around on their own. If at all possible, keep all fecal material picked up immediately and prevent the behavior from becoming a habit with the puppy.

## **CORRECTING THE PROBLEM**

Once the coprophagia has developed into a habit, it is important to break the habit as quickly as possible. To stop adult Bichon Frise dogs or puppies from eating fecal material use as many as possible of the following steps:

Take the dog or puppy to the vet for an immediate check up to ensure that there are no nutritional deficiencies or health related issues that may be contributing to the problem.

Immediately start a program to remove all fecal material from your yard as soon as possible to avoid the dog or puppy having access to dog feces.

Remove any cat litter boxes from the dog's area of the house, as many dogs will eat cat waste as well as the clumping style litters that can have serious health consequences.

There are some powders that can be added to the dog food that are basically tasteless, but that will significantly reduce the palatability of the waste material. This is often the best option if the dog will be alone in a yard or there are several dogs in the yard. Be sure that all dogs are being fed the treatment, not just the dog that has the problem.

Only take your dog outside of the yard when on a leash. Dogs can be extremely sneaky about this behavior and keeping them on a leash will keep them in your sight at all times.

Some breeders and vets also recommend sprinkling fecal material with hot pepper flakes or cayenne pepper to detract the dog or puppy from actually engaging in the coprophagia.

## **MARKING**

Marking is typically a male behavior although some dominant females may also use the behavior if no males are present. Unlike simply urinating in the house, marking is urinating in very small amounts to stake out the male dog's territory, just like they do outside. Dogs use these markers to distinguish or identify their area to other dogs. In the wild this is very important so that one male does not enter into another male's territory or only enters to try to take over the territory.

Most males will still mark when outside, urinating on bushes, fence posts and even car tires to let other dogs know that they are around. You will often note males following each other and marking over another dog's urine scent to establish or re-establish their mark.

Marking in the house is very problematic because it is often difficult to notice, especially with a smaller breed such as the Bichon Frise. Punishing a dog for marking behaviors is very ineffective as often the punishment is simply too late for the dog to even connect the behavior with the correction. Rather it is important to be able to catch the dog in the act to use a correction method.

Always pair the correction with a positive to help the dog to understand not only what you don't want but what you do want. In the case of marking, you don't want the dog urinating in the house, but you do want him to go outside.

To help prevent marking behaviors there are several options and they include:

- Early neutering will often prevent this behavior from becoming a problem if you are using the male in a breeding program or are showing the dog this may not be a viable option.
- Consider crate training and keeping the dog in a crate when you are not home to supervise. Remember time in the crate has to be minimal and that it is not a punishment or should not be seen as a punishment to the dog.
- Teach the dog a command to go to the bathroom in the right area. Pair the command with the urination and then give a reward. Although marking is not a behavior that is caused by having to go, it is often minimized or eliminated when the dog realizes he will get a treat for going outside rather than in the house.
- Tether the dog to you when you are in the house with a short, four to six foot leash that is tied to your belt or on your wrist. When you notice the dog start to sniff around the floor, by a plant or by the couch, immediately distract the dog by saying "Away" or a command you choose, then immediately take the dog outside to a post or bush and then give the "tinkle" command and then reward the dog.
- Purchase a good quality pet urine remover that has active enzymes that will destroy and not just mask the odor. Often people can't smell the urine but highly sensitive nose of the Bichon Frise certainly can. If you have more than one male this can become a serious problem as if one starts marking often others will as well.
- Never use ammonia based products, as ammonia is a natural product found in urine. Using an ammonia cleaning product can even trigger marking behaviors with males that have never had the problem.
- Squirt bottles may be used to spray the dog should you catch him in the act, but they must be paired with immediately going outdoors and having a reward for marking outside. If the water bottle is used without the reward for good behavior, the Bichon Frise will just learn to be more selective of marking only when you are not in the room.

Finally, for some dogs the only way is to have them associate marking with a negative event. Dogs can wear diapers or special dog underwear that will cause the dog to actually urinate on the diaper rather than the furniture or wall. The urine will then be in contact with the dog's skin, causing an unpleasant sensation.

Since Bichon Frise dogs, like most dogs, are very clean, this will be mildly to moderately distressful to the dog. This is a very impractical solution in the long run but if it is used immediately when marking is first started it can be very effective. It is important to change the diaper quickly and to clean up the area to prevent skin irritation and odor.

# 10

## THE AGING DOG



### **CARE OF THE AGING DOG**

Aging is a natural process in all animals. However, it does not necessarily mean a loss of quality of life for most dogs. The Bichon Frise is a breed that will stay active, energetic, and happy well into his or her senior years and are often very involved with the daily activities of the family until they are over 15 years of age.

Most aging Bichon Frise will have some temperament and behavior changes as they reach their senior years, just like humans and other animals change and slow down as the mature. Some of the differences you may notice in an aging dog include:

- Confusion and inability to respond appropriately to commands
- Hearing and vision loss
- Decrease in energy levels and ability to do all the things they used to do
- Stiffness and muscle pains
- Digestive problems and disorders
- Incontinence
- Decrease in appetite
- Increase in sleeping
- Increasing need for attention or need for greater isolation
- Possible temperament changes such as snapping or biting

Each one of these changes can be entirely normal or it may also indicate a greater health problem. Always talk to your vet and communicate any changes in behavior that seem abnormal or have suddenly become apparent.

## **ARTHRITIS, PAIN AND STIFFNESS**

If the Bichon Frise dog has a history of any type of joint or skeletal problem then arthritis is often going to become more problematic as the dog matures. Arthritis can also strike dogs in their adult years so careful monitoring of any signs of stiffness or joint pain is essential.

The senior Bichon Frise with arthritis can be treated with a variety of treatments such as arthritis drug therapies, steroids, specialized diets, additional food supplements and some all natural products are also effective. Talk to your vet or breeder for options on pain management for senior dogs with arthritis.



## **INCREASED WATER CONSUMPTION**

Most senior dogs will start to drink more water to cope with kidneys that may not be functioning as well as they did when the dog was younger. Diabetes and chronic kidney failure can also be a concern in the senior Bichon Frise so talk to your vet and be prepared to monitor the actual urine production to see if the dog is urinating excessively or hardly at all.

Increased water consumption in senior dogs can also be a factor of the type of food that they are eating so be careful about switching feeds in senior dogs.

## **BLINDNESS AND HEARING LOSS**

To people, blindness and hearing loss in dogs is very sad and heartbreaking, however for the dog, it is not associated with all the negativity that humans put on the condition. If you notice your senior Bichon Frise is starting to have trouble hearing, start pairing hand signals with commands to cope with the hearing loss. Blind dogs can live healthy and happy lives in environments that they are familiar with so avoid changing the layout of the house or yard.

With senior dogs with hearing or vision problems, great care must be taken to avoid these dogs getting out of the yard without being on a leash. They can be injured by other dogs or even run out into traffic without seeing or hearing the danger. There are many great resources available for families dealing with deaf or blind dogs that can both help owners cope as well as keep the dogs leading high quality lives.

## **CHANGES IN WEIGHT AND APPETITE**

Senior dogs tend to exercise less and gain weight faster as their metabolism slows down. They may also become very minimal eaters, often decreasing their food intake considerably as they exercise and move about less. If the food intake amount decreases significantly or suddenly take the dog to the vet as soon as possible.

If he or she is just leaving a small amount in the dish but is eating over half of the food and having normal bowel movements and showing no signs of pain or discomfort, this is just the aging process. If, however, you notice any weight loss, signs of digestive problems, abdominal pain or discomfort after eating immediately consult with the vet.

Many vets and breeders recommend switching a senior dog, especially a Bichon Frise with dental problems or significant tooth loss to a specialty diet particularly designed for senior small dog breeds. These diets can be recommended by the vet or breeder and will be specially formulated to add nutrients to the diet.

## **MEMORY OR COGNITIVE LOSS**

A Bichon Frise is a very intelligent breed that is not known for having cognitive loss as they get older, but you may notice they have trouble remembering or responding appropriately to commands you may not have used in a long time. Try to keep commands simple and basic rather than teaching new tricks if the dog seems to have trouble in remembering what you are asking.

Often, a senior dog is still very mentally capable of working on training routines, but be sure that the physical demands are appropriate for his or her age and condition.

## **EXERCISE**

It is important to continue to provide daily, appropriate exercise for your senior Bichon Frise. They still love to go for a walk although a long jog may be too demanding and they will still love to play fetch or tag, but maybe only for five minutes instead of fifteen.

Finding the right balance of providing exercise without over taxing the senior Bichon Frise is sometimes a challenge. Carefully monitor the dog and call a break or take a rest before you notice he or she seems to be struggling to keep up or is falling behind.

Most dogs are so willing to stay with their owners on runs, walks or play times that they will keep on going long after they are exhausted. This will lead to increased stiffness and movement problems the next day or even for the next few days. Exercise is important for overall health and body functioning, so even if the dog is just given two short five or ten minutes walks at a moderate or slow pace a day this can be ever effective in stimulating the senior dog both mentally and physically.

## **FOOD, WATER AND BEDDING**

Provide fresh water and food in easy to reach areas that do not require the senior dog go up or down stairs, especially if hips or elbows are a problem. Always provide appropriate types of food such as pre-soaked small dog premium kibble or balance senior formula canned food if the dog is not longer able to eat the kibble.

Bedding can be extra thick or even designed especially for senior dogs. Some manufactures now make insulated bedding that holds the dog's heat providing a self-generating-type heating pad to help with muscle relaxation and prevent stiffness. Take care to keep the senior dog's bedding in a warm, draft free area of the house where the dog feels comfortable and safe.

## **JUMPING UP**

A Bichon Frise that is used to sleeping on the bed or cuddling on the couch with your can seriously hurt his or her legs or back in trying to jump up or down off high areas. There are very safe, simple, lightweight portable stair steps for dogs that can be used to help your Bichon Frise safely step up and down off of furniture.

With a few rewards for using the two or three step stairs you will quickly have your Bichon Frise trained to use this device. In senior dogs where stairs are too difficult, there are also ramps that can be purchased that are ideal for smooth incline for going up or down off of furniture.

## **MANAGING INCONTINENCE**

Incontinence is more prevalent in female Bichon Frise dogs but can occur in males as well. Typically, this will be most problematic with females that have had several litters of puppies or females that have been spayed and have had little estrogen production over the years. In both situations, there are estrogen supplements or medications that can be given to cause the muscles of the bladder to tighten, preventing leakage.

There are also diapers and pads that can be used to absorb any leakage or moisture. Since most incontinence will occur when the dog is sleeping or very relaxed, often pads are just placed on the bedding and changed in the morning. Depending on the severity of the problem, the vet may have other options that can help manage or control incontinence.

## **ATTENTION**

A senior Bichon Frise will need to have just as much attention and love as a puppy or adult. As a breed the Bichon Frise becomes more attached to his or her family as he or she ages, but they still remain happy, friendly and willing to meet new people and animals throughout their lives.

If you have a senior Bichon Frise, be sure to monitor his or her interactions with other, younger dogs to avoid any possible injury or over-exertion by the senior dog. Also remember to play with your senior Bichon Frise and make him or her feel a part of the family.

# CONCLUSION

The Bichon Frise is a beautiful, energetic, and lovable bundle of white fur that is ideal for an active, involved family or person. A social breed of dog they seem to have no end of curiosity and ability to get along with new people, other dogs and non-canine pets and especially with children. Not a delicate dog the Bichon Frise is never the less a small breed that is easily recognized for their unique coat and jaunty personality.

Here are some of the most commonly asked questions regarding the Bichon Frise.

## **BICHON FRISE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

***1. I have heard the name of the breed pronounced several different ways, what is the right pronunciation?***

The correct pronunciation for the breed is actually BEE-shon Free-ZAY. The breed is also known as Bichon à poil frisé in France and some other countries.

***2. I really like a poodle type clip and since my Bichon Frise looks very poodle-like, can I use that type of clip?***

If you are being strictly correct, a Bichon Frise breeder or lover would definitely not recommend any other cut than the pet cut for the Bichon Frise breed. The Bichon Frise is not a poodle and is never shown in a poodle clip or cut.

***3. I understand that the Bichon Frise used to be used as a circus dog, is that correct?***

Throughout Europe in the early 1800s, the Bichon Frise was considered to be the most highly desirable circus and trick dog. Many people and even historians have mistakenly identified the circus dog as the toy poodle, when in fact it is much more likely that most of these dogs were, in fact, Bichon Frise. The confusion is most likely in the similar curly coat that is most obvious when the Bichon Frise is not clipped, just as they would have been at that time.

***4. What is a halo on a Bichon Frise?***

The halo is the dark circle or area of skin around the eyes that give a unique depth to the eye. The halo is considered an essential part of the breed description of the Bichon Frise in the show ring.

**5. *I have heard that the Bichon Frise is not a good dog for re-homing or adopting, is that correct?***

No, that is incorrect. The Bichon Frise is not considered to be a strongly bonding breed although they do become attached to their families. The Bichon Frise is typically considered to be a very good dog for re-homing or adoption as they are very adaptable. It is, of course, always in the dog's best interest to stay in the original family whenever possible.

**6. *Is the Bichon Frise a long lived breed of dog?***

As with any type of dog buying from a reputable breeder with a proven breeding line is the best assurance of getting a healthy puppy that will live a long and healthy life. Most Bichon Frise will live to be fourteen to fifteen years of age; however it is also possible for them to live much longer.

**7. *Do I have to clip my Bichon Frise's coat or can I leave it natural?***

Clipping is highly recommended, unless you have the time to groom thoroughly every day. The longer the coat, the more problems with matting as dead hair becomes trapped in the coat. Many owners learn how to do a basic pet clip and do monthly clipping at home to ensure that they get just the cut they want plus save time and money in regular professional grooming.

**8. *If my Bichon Frise is registered with the Bichon Frise Club, is it automatically registered with the American Kennel Club or any other Kennel Club?***

No, it is not. Each club and registry is separate but dog may be registered in multiple clubs and organizations. Many of Bichon Frise dogs are registered in both the American Kennel Club and the Bichon Frise Club of America and some are also registered in the Canadian Kennel Club as well.

**9. *My friend just bought a Bichon Frise that is not all white, is this still a Bichon Frise?***

A Bichon Frise puppy may have slightly darker coloration that will lighten as the puppy matures. A mature Bichon Frise should be as close to pure white as possible although other colors such as apricot and cream are allowed on the dog as long as they do not cover more than 10% of the body.

**10. *I want to use my Bichon Frise in an event, what would you suggest?***

With its natural intelligence, the Bichon Frise will excel in many different types of events. They can be used in the show ring, as agility dogs, in obedience events and even in fun events such as fly ball. The Bichon Frise is not a hunting or herding dog so is not seen in these two types of competitions.

# SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR BICHON FRISE

## **UNITED STATES**

- [http://www.akc.org/breeds/bichon\\_frise/index.cfm](http://www.akc.org/breeds/bichon_frise/index.cfm)
- <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/bichonfrise.htm>
- <http://www.bichon.org/>
- <http://www.bichonfriseusa.com/>
- <http://puppydogweb.com/bichonfrise.htm>
- <http://www.bichonrescue.org/>
- <http://www.fix.net/~dogmag/bichon/bichon-home.html>
- <http://www.canismajor.com/dog/bichon.html>
- <http://www.bichon.org/rescue.htm>
- <http://www.virginiabichonrescue.org/>
- <http://www.jasme.com/>

## **CANADA**

- <http://www.bichonfriseclubofcanada.com/>
- <http://canbichon.tripod.com/>
- <http://www.canadasguidetodogs.com/bichon.htm>
- <http://www.ckc.ca/en/Default.aspx?tabid=99&BreedCode=BCF>
- <http://www.smallpawsrescue.org/>
- <http://members.tripod.com/~JuliaD/>



- <http://www.dogpage.us/heavens-bichons/index.html>
- <http://canbichon.tripod.com/00newtheme/home.htm>
- <http://members.tripod.com/~Normandy/bichon.htm>
- <http://starlitbichon.com/>

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

- <http://www.pets4homes.co.uk/pets4homes/home.nsf/dogsforsale!openform&Breed=Bichon%20Frise>
- <http://www.bichonfriserescue.co.uk/>
- <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/179>
- <http://canadianbichonfrise.com/>
- <http://www.nextdaydogs.com/breeders/find~Bichon+Frise~Canada~dog+breeders~CA~1100037.aspx>
- <http://www.dogsworldwide.com/bichonfriseclubofireland.htm>
- <http://www.bichons.btinternet.co.uk/bichonlinks.htm>
- <http://www.bichons.freeseve.co.uk/BFCGB.htm>
- <http://www.sulykabichons.co.uk/>
- <http://www.colynthia-bichons.talktalk.net/>

## **AUSTRALIA**

- <http://www.bichonfrise.com.au/>
- <http://www.nutripet.com.au/>
- <http://www.pedigree.com.au/breeds/?b=274&p=B&pp=>
- <http://www.petnet.com.au/dogs/D111.html>
- <http://www.dogsonline.com.au/showdog2006/topbybreed.asp?breed=250>

- <http://www.ankc.aust.com/bichon.html>
- [http://www.kaynineonline.com/breed\\_bichon.htm](http://www.kaynineonline.com/breed_bichon.htm)
- <http://www.i-pet.com.au/body.asp?category=294>
- <http://www.ozdoggy.com.au/ozdoggy/profile.jsp?ozdoggyid=3980>
- [http://www.vca.org.au/Breed\\_Details.asp?Breed=Bichon%20Frise](http://www.vca.org.au/Breed_Details.asp?Breed=Bichon%20Frise)

## **GENERAL DOG SITES**

- <http://www.nextdaypets.com/directory/breeds/>
- <http://www.terrificpets.com/>
- <http://www.i-love-dogs.com/>
- <http://dogs.about.com/>
- <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/>
- <http://www.dogchannel.com/>
- <http://www.dneprimport.com/>
- <http://www.dogluvers.com/>
- <http://www.thefoundbin.com/lost-and-found-articles/102-weird-facts-you-never-knew-about-dogs>
- <http://rulingcatsanddogs.com/dogs-main-health-tips-trivia-facts-canine-behavior.htm>
- <http://www.thepetcenter.com/>
- <http://www.my-dog.info/>
- <http://www.vetinfo4dogs.com/>
- <http://www.greatdogsite.com/>

## **PICTURE CREDITS**

---

- 1 Copyright Christine Bork at bigstockphoto.com
- 2 Copyright tilo at stockxpert.com
- 3 Copyright Michael Ledray
- 4 Copyright Ayesha Wilson at bigstockphoto.com
- 5 Copyright Christine Bork at bigstockphoto.com
- 6 Copyright Paul Evans at bigstockphoto.com
- 7 Copyright Jacqueline Abromeit
- 8 Blooming Rose Bud owned by Mr Spiers. Photo by Sannse at the City of Birmingham Championship Dog Show, 29th August 2003
- 9 Copyright Matthew Scherf
- 10 Copyright Michael Ledray
- 11 Copyright Michael Ledray

\*\*\*\*\*

All rights reserved.

Other than one copy printed and saved in the purchaser's computer, and or a copy placed on a CD or other storage device for the purchaser, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical or electronic, including photocopying and recording, or by information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission or further information should be addressed to;

Sharda Baker

[www.your-bichon-frise.com](http://www.your-bichon-frise.com)

Contact us at;

<http://www.asksharda.com/support/>

### **Legal Notices**

While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein.

The publisher and author assume no responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader of the material provided. The author and publisher suggest that the purchaser or reader always discuss any changes to care and management of their dog with their Vet.