

MY MALTESE IS A LEGEND

Bonus Content

Annual Care Calendar & Toxic Foods and Substances

Two appendices from the book, designed to be consulted quickly.

Print them and keep them close.

Valerio Bernardo

APPENDIX A

Annual Care Calendar

All routine care interventions distributed throughout the year. Adapt them to your veterinarian's recommendations and record dates in your dog's health booklet.

Every month

- External antiparasitic (fleas, ticks): spot-on, tablet or collar as prescribed
- Body weight check with home scales (record in health booklet)
- Full coat inspection zone by zone (mats, parasites, lesions)
- Ear inspection (wax, odour, redness)
- Nail growth check (trim if necessary)

Every three months

- Deworming (oral endoparasitic treatment)
- Bath with specific shampoo (if not already done monthly)
- Anal glands check (palpation; if full, consult veterinarian)
- Teeth and gums inspection (tartar, redness, bad breath)

Every six months

- General veterinary check-up (mandatory from age 8 onwards)
- Leishmaniasis test in endemic areas (before sandfly season)
- Diet review based on weight, age and season

Every year	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booster vaccinations (distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, parainfluenza, leptospirosis) • Rabies vaccination (mandatory for international travel, recommended always) • Full blood tests: complete blood count, biochemical profile, electrolytes • Urinalysis • Heartworm prevention (monthly tablets from April to November in endemic areas) • Professional dental cleaning (if needed, assessed by veterinarian)

Additional checks by age group

Puppy (0 – 12 months)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full vaccination course (8th, 12th, 16th week)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent deworming (every 15 days for first 3 months)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microchip and registration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patellar luxation check (between 4 and 6 months)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retained deciduous teeth assessment (between 6 and 8 months)
Adult (1 – 7 years)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard protocol above
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline echocardiogram between 5 and 7 years
Senior (8 – 10 years)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual veterinary visits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual echocardiogram
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth kidney and liver function tests
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thyroid hormone levels (TSH, T4)
Geriatric (over 10 years)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterinary visits every 4–6 months
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood pressure monitoring

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognitive assessment (canine cognitive dysfunction)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic joint pain management

APPENDIX B

Toxic Foods and Substances

Toxicity varies with the amount ingested and the dog's weight. In the Maltese, being a small breed, even small doses can be dangerous. If accidental ingestion occurs, contact your veterinarian immediately without waiting for symptoms.

■ EXTREME DANGER — potentially fatal

Chocolate

All types, especially dark and baking chocolate. Contains theobromine, metabolised very slowly by dogs. Toxic dose for a 3 kg Maltese: as little as 30 g of dark chocolate can be serious. Symptoms: vomiting, agitation, rapid heartbeat, convulsions.

Xylitol

Sweetener found in sugar-free sweets, chewing gum, some toothpastes and diet baked goods. Causes severe hypoglycaemia and acute liver failure. Toxic dose: as low as 0.1 g/kg — less than one piece of chewing gum for a 3 kg Maltese.

Grapes and raisins

Cause acute kidney failure. Mechanism not fully understood. Susceptibility varies but is unpredictable: even small amounts can be fatal.

Onion, garlic, leeks, shallots

Contain sulphur compounds that damage red blood cells causing haemolytic anaemia. Toxic both raw and cooked. Beware of sauces, broths and prepared foods.

Macadamia nuts

Cause muscle weakness, tremors and hyperthermia. Even a few grams are sufficient.

Alcohol (any source)

Even small amounts can cause coma and respiratory arrest.

▲ SERIOUS DANGER

Caffeine (coffee, tea, energy drinks, cola)

Rapid heartbeat, agitation, tremors, convulsions.

Avocado

Contains persin, toxic to dogs. Skin and stone more dangerous than the flesh.

Walnuts and pecans

Can cause intestinal blockages; if mouldy, produce severe neurotoxins.

Raw dough and leavened mixtures

Yeast continues fermenting in the stomach causing gastric bloating and alcohol production.

Cooked bones

Splinter into sharp shards that can perforate the intestine. Never give cooked chicken, rabbit or pork bones.

• MODERATE RISK — avoid

- Milk and dairy products (many dogs are lactose intolerant)
- Raw eggs (salmonella risk; avidin interferes with biotin absorption)
- Raw freshwater fish (parasites, destroys thiamine)
- Excess salt (dehydration, hypertension)
- Sugar and sweets (obesity, diabetes, tooth decay)
- Excess liver (vitamin A toxicity)
- Stone fruits — peaches, apricots, cherries (stones contain cyanide)

Toxic houseplants

High risk	Medium risk
• Poinsettia (<i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i>)	• Cyclamen
• Oleander — all parts, highly toxic	• Hydrangea
• Azalea and rhododendron	• Tulip (bulbs)
• Lily	• Daffodil (bulbs)
• Lily of the Valley (cardiac toxicity)	• Ivy
• Yew (<i>Taxus baccata</i>)	• Ficus
• Dieffenbachia, Philodendron, Peace Lily	

Dangerous household products

- Car antifreeze (ethylene glycol): sweet taste, extremely toxic to kidneys
- Cleaning products containing ammonia or bleach
- Rat and slug bait (brodifacoum, metaldehyde)
- Large-breed antiparasitic treatments applied to a Maltese (overdose risk)
- Ibuprofen, paracetamol, aspirin and all human NSAIDs
- Antidepressant medications
- Garden fertilisers and pesticides

In emergencies contact your nearest emergency veterinary clinic or national animal poison control centre.

Extracted from "My Maltese is a Legend" — Valerio Bernardo