**A black silhouette of a dog

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| **Nose to Tail Body Check**  **Staff must ensure that the animals are kept clean and comfortable.**  **There must be sufficient clean resting places to provide comfort and warmth for every dog.**  **Dogs should have a grooming and health check regime agreed with the owner, such as wiping weepy eyes or avoiding long fur from matting. Attention must be paid to the dog’s coat, teeth, ears and nails, and a check for parasites.**  All our dogs are monitored daily for health, grooming and owners are informed within 24 hours should any concerning issues arise. Any health or grooming issues are addressed immediately.  All our dogs have a grooming and health check regime agreed with the owner, such as  wiping weepy eyes or avoiding long fur from matting. We pay particular attention to the dog’s coat, teeth, ears and nails, and a check for parasites. We have a “Top to Tail- How to Guide” to ensure we ‘groom’ / ‘body check’ each dog properly.  We have owner’s written consent to Groom their dog. See Dog Registration and Consent form.  **GROOMING**  As Licensed Home boarders it is not necessary for us to be qualified Dog Groomers, but it is essential welfare for dogs in our care to be groomed. Grooming can form a bond between the dog and its owner, or carer too.  Grooming isn’t all about using equipment like a comb or a brush, a dog can be groomed by using my hands in a gentle massaging way or checking its body from nose to tail.  I only groom a dog if it is safe to do so, if the dog has no issues about human touching them or interacting with them, and if I have gained permission from the owner.  Hands-on with a gentle massage means that I can check body areas properly and feel whether a dog reacts or whether they are OK with it. Where there is a negative reaction, I stop, soothe the dog with my voice, reaffirming that they are good, and try again. I will always be gentle.  Grooming entails checking a dog’s coat, running my hands over the entire of its body down over its legs onto his foot and under his paws and in some cases between the interdigitals, (the space between the paws). I am aware that some dogs like Cockers for example have sensitive paws and just do not like their feet touched and may pull away.  I check the dog’s nose, gums and teeth, tongue, eyes and ears, smelling their ears.  I check how long or short its nails are, are there any broken or frayed nails? If the nails are too long, I suggest to the owner’s that they maybe should do more pavement walking to keep the nails in check.  Our Healthy Dog Check is:   1. **Look and feel the dog’s nose**   The dog’s nose may not be cold and wet! If the dog’s nose is warm or a bit dry, but everything else seems fine and he is eating and drinking normally, I don’t worry. Check the dog’s nose for any soreness or discharge. Excessive dryness and scaliness can be an inherited disease in certain breeds.   1. **Look at the dog’s eyes**   The eyes should be bright. A certain amount of discharge due to an abnormal amount of tears will result in a blackish residue building up in the corner of the eye. This is normal for most dogs. I wipe any residue away with a soft damp cloth or special eye wipes with aloe vera, if the dog allows me. Many spaniels have tear stains and these are difficult to remove, so I just make sure today’s build up has been removed.  If i notice any of the following, I would contact the owner and if necessary take the dog to the vet for advice.   * Green or yellow discharge * Excessive watering * Squinting or closing of one or both eyes which may mean it’s painful. * Whites of the eye appear more pink/ red than usual. * If the dog is rubbing their eye.  1. **Look and smell dog’s ears**   Learn what is normal for a dog. Floppy ears or hairy ears can hide problems. Hair in itself is not necessarily a problem. I do not remove any hair from a dog’s ear as this can lead to inflammation. Get advice from the vet. A small amount of wax can be normal and protective but excess quantities can lead to scratching and infection. Get veterinary advice if I find:   * Redness. * Sticky or purulent discharge. * Black crumbly discharge. * The dog is scratching their ear/s. * There is a nasty smell. * Pain in or around the ear. * Swelling, causing the entrance into the ear to close up.   If I do find a problem and take the dog to the vet, they will often prescribe drops for the dog. In some cases, they will want me or the owner to clean the dog’s ears as a routine to prevent problems from recurring. It is very important to only do this with veterinary instruction.   1. Teeth and Gums   I try to examine the dog’s teeth and gums regularly but am always careful when doing so – some dogs just will not allow it! In most cases I only need to raise/ lower the lips to check the teeth. This is what I’m looking for:   * Brown tartar building up, this usually starts or is worse on the back teeth. * Redness along the gum/ tooth margin * Nasty smells * Gum problems where the teeth roots are exposed, this can be very painful. * Any lumps on the gums or under the tongue – if I can see. Often dogs put the tongue to the back of the mouth when I open their mouths.   I always tell my customers that vets will be only too happy to give advice on how to look after the dog’s teeth at home, and what diets may help with those that won’t tolerate the toothbrush! There are also finger brushes to encourage the dog to get used to having something in their mouth. Some dogs use plaque remover in their meals.   1. **The dog’s skin**   I use my eyes and hands to examine the skin all over the body. Firstly, note whether the dog is biting/ chewing or scratching their skin, and whether there are any obvious changes in the coat. I look in all the hidden places like under the front legs and between the pads. Don’t forget to look for evidence of fleas, even if the dog is treated regularly for them. Flea droppings look like bits of black soot. Rashes are not uncommon and may appear like red rings or spots. Whilst examining the skin sometimes I may also come across lumps and bumps. If I have any concerns, record this and inform the owner and get advice from the vets.   1. **Nails**   I look at the dog’s nails. In long-haired dogs especially it is important to check the dew claws as they can grow right round and become embedded in the pad. The length of nails often worries owners who are reluctant to clip them themselves for fear of making them bleed.   1. **The dog’s bottom**   I finish the check up by having a quick look under the dog’s tail. Anal glands are scent glands which are just inside the bottom. They can get impacted or infected and can cause pain and irritation if they do. Normally I won’t see anything, but if there is swelling or redness on either side of the anus, depending on the length of stay for the dog (day/boarding) either I would contact the vet for advice or I would suggest to the owner to check it out, with their vets. If the dog drags his back end across the floor, this is usually because of full anal glands and not because he has worms. |
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If a dog has been playing, toileting or walking in wet weather, it is important to dry the dog properly with a towel, or pop them into a drying coat if they are soaked.

If the weather has been particularly muggy or hot and the dogs have been in water, I dry their feet thoroughly, and we also have cool coats. Some breeds are prone to Hot Spots.

Where possible I soak, wash & shampoo dog’s feet after a muddy walk to reduce the risk of Alabama Rot, and remove any caked mud, seed heads or other natures debris, from their paws and between their interdigitals etc.

If I find anything significant on this health /grooming check I notify the owner and if necessary contact the vet and take advice too.