

The Miniature Schnauzer

Tori Houle, Lifestyle Contributor and Junior Editor

Tori has more than 2 years of experience in the pet health industry and is junior editor of IDEXX's Pet Health Network team.

Background

The Miniature Schnauzer breed comes from humble beginnings: they were once kept as small farm dogs and ratters – dogs kept around to control rat problems – in Germany. Created by crossing a standard Schnauzer with the Affenpinscher breed, the Miniature Schnauzer breed became popular in America in the years after WWII.

Sizing up

Average physical characteristics of the Miniature Schnauzer breed are:

- Height: 12-14 in.
- Weight: 12-20 lbs.
- Lifespan: 12-15 years
- Color: black, black and silver, salt and pepper
- Coat: wiry when petted, soft and curly when unclipped

What are they like?

Don't let their humble beginnings fool you: intelligent and alert, Miniature Schnauzers are a blast to have around the house. "Schnauzer" means "small beard" in German, and their "beards" give them a smart, distinguished look.

Miniature Schnauzers have a lot of energy, are fast, and because they are a terrier breed, they can be pretty determined when it comes to backyard games like tug-of-war. As very smart dogs, they tend to excel in obedience training classes. They are also very loving and dependable, can be kept indoors or out, can make good guard dogs because they'll alert you the minute they hear someone outside.

Miniature Schnauzers are generally a very healthy breed, and this in part explains their popularity. However, there are a few common health concerns to consider:

- Diseases related to high fat levels, such as Hyperlipidemia and [Pancreatitis](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- [Hip dysplasia](#)
- [Kidney stones](#)
- Portosystemic shunt
- Mitral Valve Disease

Right for you?

Miniature Schnauzers make fun and loyal companions, but with any breed, there are some things to think about when considering welcoming one into your home:

- **Miniature Schnauzers require a lot of upkeep when it comes to grooming.** Although they are a non-shedding breed, they do require regular grooming because they get pretty shaggy. Usually, owners should expect to break out the clippers 3-4 times per year minimum to trim the back, beard, and eyebrows. Commercial groomers are a great option but can be expensive.
- As an active dog that can become very attached to owners, **the Miniature Schnauzer thrives on attention and affection.** At times, they can be a bit rowdy if not given an outlet for their energy. If you aren't able to put in the time, it could be a problem.

If you're willing to put in grooming time and are looking for a high-energy, endlessly lovable dog, a Miniature Schnauzer could make you the perfect pet.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.