



FREE WORKSHEET FOR NEW PUPPY OWNERS

Is Puppy Insurance Worth It?

Put your savings, quotes and questions in one place. See which costs you would still need to cover before choosing a policy.

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Print it or fill it in on screen. Allow time to gather and confirm your quotes.

Ten quiet minutes. No money degree needed.

New puppy owners hear two loud camps. One says "always insure." The other says "it's a rip off." Both can be right, for different households.

Use your own numbers to compare the tradeoffs and identify questions for the insurer.

Have ready

- Two or three quotes, or insurer websites open
- Your savings balance
- Your puppy's breed and age

You'll finish with

- Options to discuss and check
- The questions to ask before you sign
- A date to check your answer again

LoveMyPuppy doesn't sell insurance, and this worksheet doesn't link to any insurer. We'd rather you pick the right answer than a particular plan.

STEP 1

The "could I pay it tomorrow?" test

A single bill is a starting point, not a ceiling. Costs depend on the clinic, treatment and location. Use \$2,500 below as a fictional scenario, then consider larger or repeated bills too.

Savings I could use tomorrow, without a credit card: _____

A vet bill that would really hurt us: _____

What I could set aside each month for the dog: _____

Could you pay a \$2,500 emergency tonight without debt?

☐ Yes, easily ☐ Yes, but it would sting ☐ No

Breed check

Some breeds carry known problems, like hips or knees. Ask your vet or breeder what runs in your puppy's breed, then write it down.

Conditions that run in my puppy's breed: _____

The \$2,500 scenario is an illustration, not a veterinary cost estimate.

Think beyond one bill. Ask how you would manage ongoing treatment, more than one claim, and the money needed before reimbursement.

STEP 2

Three quotes, side by side

Use one column per quote. Keep unknown answers blank and ask the insurer to confirm them. Check the actual policy documents before making your decision.

What to compare	Quote A	Quote B	Quote C
Insurer and plan name			
Monthly price			
Price per year (monthly x 12)			
Deductible (per year or per condition?)			
Reimburses what % of eligible costs?			
Most it pays per year			
Waiting period: accidents			
Waiting period: illness			
Waiting period: hips and knees			
Exam fees covered?			
Hereditary and congenital covered?			
Both-sides rule (knees, hips, eyes)			
Can it pay the vet directly?			
Wellness add-on price, if offered			

For a sense of scale: NAPHIA's latest report puts the average US dog accident and illness plan at \$836 a year. Accident-only averaged \$190. Those averages cover dogs of every age, so your puppy's quote may differ.

Source: NAPHIA, State of the Industry 2026 (US data at year-end 2025).

Getting quotes fast

Use the same deductible, reimbursement rate and annual limit where possible. Then check coverage differences, eligible expenses and whether the deductible is annual or per condition.

STEP 3

What would a plan really pay back?

The monthly price is only half the story. The other half is what comes back when the bill arrives. Most plans pay you after you pay the vet.

Check eligible costs, remaining deductible, calculation order and limits.

Use eligible expenses, not automatically the full bill. Confirm the remaining deductible, calculation order and limits. A calculation below zero means no payout, not a negative claim.

Two possible calculation orders

Deductible first: (eligible costs - deductible) x rate. Rate first: (eligible costs x rate) - deductible.

Now try your own numbers

Your numbers	Quote A	Quote B	Quote C
The bill that would hurt (Step 1)			
Payback on that bill			
What you'd still pay yourself			
Price per year (Step 2)			

Worked example: a \$2,500 emergency

Fictional example: \$2,500 eligible costs, 90%, \$500 remaining deductible, no other limits.
Deductible first: \$1,800 back. Rate first: \$1,750 back. Premiums are additional.

The quiet-year check

With no covered claim, you still pay the premiums. Consider that cost alongside the risk of large or recurring bills. A savings fund can also cover costs insurance does not reimburse.

If nothing happens this year, I'd spend:

Saved instead, by month 12 I'd have:

Covering one example bill does not settle the decision. Consider repeated bills, ongoing care, your budget, policy exclusions and how much financial risk you can accept.

Sources: NAIC pet insurance overview; NerdWallet, Is Pet Insurance Worth It (2026).

STEP 4

The fine print that catches puppy owners

Tick each box once you've checked it in the policy, not the ad.

- ☐ Pre-existing conditions. Definitions, exclusions and exceptions vary by policy and state. Ask about symptoms and veterinary records before the start date and during waiting periods. Get the insurer's answer in writing. Do not delay veterinary care to obtain insurance.
- ☐ Waiting periods. Ask when accident, illness and orthopedic coverage starts for your policy and state. A model law is not automatically the law everywhere. Write the confirmed dates below, including any conditions for a waiver.
- ☐ Exam fees. Check whether examination fees are eligible for reimbursement and whether any separate limit applies. Ask for the policy wording rather than relying on the advertising.
- ☐ The both-sides rule. Some policies have bilateral exclusions affecting both sides of the body. Ask whether this applies to your puppy and which conditions are affected.
- ☐ Wellness add-ons. Routine-care benefits differ from accident and illness coverage. Check the benefit limits and cost against the care you expect to use.
- ☐ **Price as your dog ages.** In one NerdWallet sample, the same plan cost \$35.11 a month at 3 months old and \$156.59 at 12 years.
- ☐ Cancellation and refunds. Ask for your policy's review period, deadline and refund conditions. These depend on the contract and applicable state rules.

Five questions to ask before you sign

1. What would count as pre-existing for my puppy?
2. What are the waiting periods for accidents, illness, hips and knees?
3. Is the deductible yearly or per condition? Is it taken before or after the percentage?
4. Are exam fees, hereditary and congenital conditions covered?
5. How will my price change as my dog gets older?

Your waiting-period calendar

Date	What it means
	Policy starts
	Accidents covered from
	Illness covered from
	Hips and knees covered from
	Review/cancellation deadline (confirm refund terms)

STEP 5

Your answer, in one sentence

Use these options to organize your thinking. You can combine insurance with a savings fund.

☐ Consider accident and illness cover. Check covered conditions, exclusions, affordability and the upfront costs you would still need to pay.

☐ Consider accident-only cover. Check which accidents qualify and what remains excluded. Illness costs generally remain your responsibility under this type of policy.

☐ Consider self-funding, or saving alongside insurance. Plan for larger and repeated bills, not only the example amount. Revisit the decision as your circumstances change.

My answer, in one sentence:

Monthly amount into the dog fund or plan:

Date I'll check this again (before the first birthday):

Dog fund tracker (if you chose a fund, or want both)

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12

Write the running total in each box. Seeing it grow makes it easier to leave alone.

While you sort out the money, the daily part starts tonight

Under 12 weeks? The **First 14 Days Kit** puts your whole house on one schedule. Between 12 and 26 weeks? **The 3 to 6 Month Puppy Plan** covers what changes next.

Not insurance, financial or veterinary advice. Policies, prices and state laws change. Always read the policy documents and ask the insurer before you buy. Talk to your vet about your puppy's health.

Sources. NAIC Pet Insurance Model Act #633 (content.naic.org). NAPHIA State of the Industry 2026 highlights (naphia.org). South Carolina Department of Insurance, Is Pet Insurance Worth It? (doi.sc.gov). Tufts Cummings School, Do I need pet insurance? (vet.tufts.edu). Healthy Paws FAQ (healthypawspetinsurance.com). NerdWallet, Is Pet Insurance Worth It? (nerdwallet.com). Rover, Cost of Owning a Dog 2026 (rover.com).