

Choosing a Happy, Healthy, Puppy



A fun, effective, and easy guide!

Check us out on the web:

<http://www.happyhealthypuppy.com>

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Your Happy, Healthy, Puppy



A dog can be one of the most fun, relaxing, constants in our stressed-out, busy lives. Dogs can help teach us, and our children, compassion, love, and friendship. The right dog for you will be a true friend who will stay by your side throughout all of life's troubles.

Choosing a special dog that fits your lifestyle can be a long, difficult process. This book is designed to help guide you through the difficult decisions you need to make in as easy and fun a way as possible. This book can help you decide:

- if you get your dog from a breeder, locally, or from a shelter or rescue
- if you should get a puppy or an adult dog
- how to you know if you're paying too much (or too little) for your dog
- how you can make sure your puppy is healthy
- how you can avoid puppy mills

Top 10 Tips!

If you don't read anything else in this book, be sure to read these tips. They could save you a lot of time, heartache, and money!

1. The most important stage in getting a dog is spending time determining what you want in a dog, and what kind of dog fits in well with your family. Read through [*Choosing a Dog, page 23*](#) for valuable tips on picking the right dog for you.
2. Don't buy from a pet store! A large number of pet stores sell dogs from puppy mills — horrible places where dogs are bred in huge numbers with little regard for their health or socialization.
3. Research any potential breeder carefully! There are a lot of disreputable breeders out there who are in it for the money. Don't ever buy from a breeder who refuses to show you his breeding facility, or who only seems interested in getting your money.
4. Some of the best dogs come from shelters and rescues. It's a myth that all dogs in shelters and rescues are someone's problem dog. For the most part, dogs of all ages are surrendered through no fault of their own (allergies, divorce, moving abroad, and, often, an owner who didn't carefully weigh all the work involved in having a dog).
5. People trying to sell you a puppy will tell you that a puppy with purebred papers is of better quality than a puppy without papers. This isn't necessarily true. Registration simply means that the puppy's parents are members of a recognized breed, and that the puppy's

ancestry is of the same breed over many generations. Purebred registration *does not* mean that a puppy is of breeding quality, healthier than a non-registered puppy, more intelligent than a non-registered puppy, or an example of an excellent temperament.

6. Getting a non-shedding or short-haired dog does almost nothing to reduce asthmatic or allergic reactions, since all dogs have the proteins in dog skin, saliva, dander, and even dog urine that cause problems. There are some non-allergenic breeds of dogs, however, that produce fewer of these irritating proteins. See [*Non-shedding*](#) and non-allergenic dogs, [*page 25*](#) for more information.
7. Extremely popular or trendy breeds or cross breeds, such as Labridoodles, Malti-Poos, and even Dalmatians, tend to attract bad breeders that are only in the business to make money. These disreputable breeders may cut corners on the health and socialization of your puppy, so be especially careful to buy these trendy breeds or cross breeds from a reputable breeder.
8. The best way to determine what a puppy will be like as an adult is to see the puppy's parents. This is true for both purebreds and mixed breed dogs.
9. You should **never** give a puppy as a gift! Animal shelters are flooded after Christmas with dogs that were given as gifts. A puppy is an enormous decision that requires a lot of commitment and time.
10. Spay or neuter your dog! It's a myth that spaying or neutering makes dogs fat and lazy. Most dogs are overweight because they're fed too much, and not exercised enough. Each

year in the United States between *three and four million* animals are euthanized. Spaying or neutering is an important step in reducing the number of unwanted dogs that end up at animal shelters.

Before You Buy a Puppy

*"Scratch a dog and you'll find a permanent job."
Franklin P. Jones*



Most people spend more time choosing their next car than deciding on the right breed and dog for them. People keep their cars only a handful of years before trading them in, but a dog can be with you for well over a decade. The dog also sleeps in your house, is a companion to your children, and becomes a close member of your family. As such, the decision to buy a dog should be weighed much more carefully than the decision to buy a car.

An adorable puppy is heartbreakingly cute and cuddly, but requires an incredible investment in time and money for many years. New pet owners commonly underestimate the energy and money needed to socialize and train a dog. A new puppy can even increase stress in the family, especially in situations where there are other animals, children, or elderly parents that need to be cared for.

An impulsive decision to buy a puppy can end up being disappointing, frustrating, and eventually result in surrendering the dog to a shelter. Millions of dogs are euthanized each year in shelters. For the most part, dogs are euthanized as a result of their owner's shortcomings, and through no fault of their own. Dogs end up in shelters for many reasons, including when the owner:

- made an impulsive purchase without clearly thinking through the time, effort, money needed to raise a puppy
- chose the wrong breed of dog for their lifestyle
- selected a dog based on popularity or looks, rather than temperament
- failed to consider their lifestyle changes over the next 12 years (an average dog's lifespan)
- was not able (or willing) to effectively socialize their dogs
- was unable to deal with common training problems
- was not able to provide a long-term physical home for their new dog

The most crucial question you should ask yourself is: Why do I want a dog?

Why Do You Want A Dog?

There a lot of wonderful reasons for wanting to have a dog become part of your life. People want a dog for many reasons, including love, companionship, and an exercise partner. But beware if you want a dog for one of the following reasons:

For your child

When you buy a puppy for your kids, be well aware that the person cleaning up the dog poo, filling the water dish, letting the dog out at six in the morning will be... you. Do

you think that your children will take care of the dog's feeding, watering, and walking? If so, think again...

Your kids may spend a great deal of time playing with a new puppy during the honeymoon period when you first get your dog. However, they'll likely play with the puppy a little bit less and less as time goes on. Children, especially young children, also need to learn how to treat a dog, and guess who'll be teaching them? Yes, you... more work...

Your children's interests and activities will change over the years. A six-year old may love romping with your puppy in the back yard, but when he's 13, he'll likely be far more interested in playing video games and hanging out with friends, leaving amusing the dog up to... you, again. Do you see a pattern?

There's also the chance that rambunctious children (often through roughhousing that gets unintentionally carried away) can hurt a small puppy, or that a larger, rambunctious dog could unintentionally hurt a child. Some breeds of dogs may have aggressive or herding instincts that you may need to teach your children about to reduce the risk of the children getting hurt. You may need to constantly watch over the kids and the dog to make sure that neither hurts the other.

As a guard dog

A security fence, an alarm system, or other security measures may be a lot more effective than a dog in about 99% of situations. What will happen to the dog if his protection is no longer needed? Will you still want the dog? This taken into consideration, a guard dog can be really effective in some business or agricultural situations when the owner or trainer is well versed in dog training and handling.

To attract women

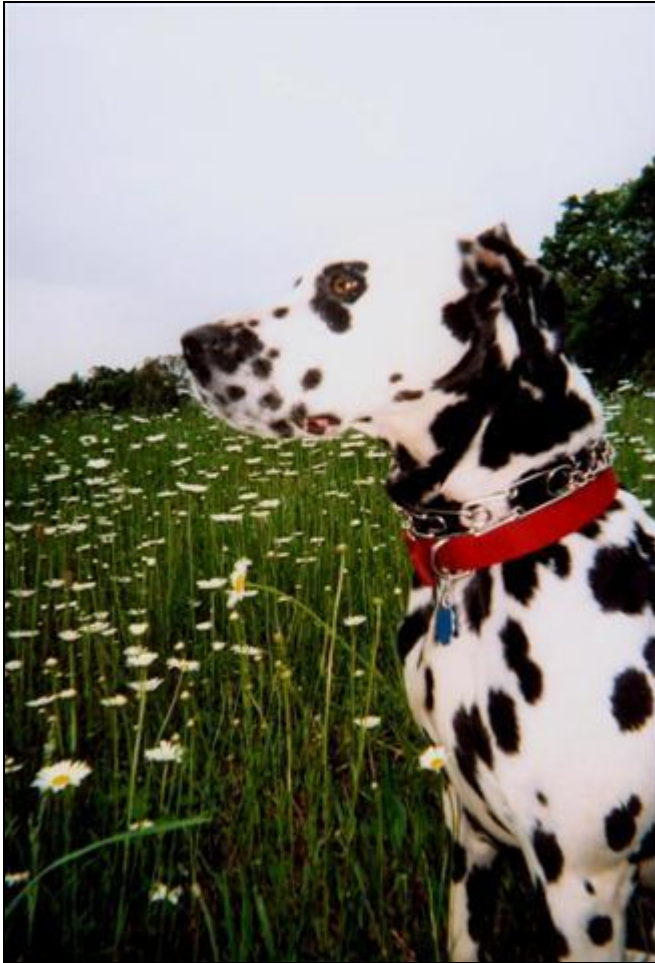
Well, OK, there's definitely some truth to this one. My husband swears that he was swarmed by all shapes and sizes of women when he used to walk Buster, his sister's Terrier/Lab cross puppy in the park. You have to live with this dog 24 hours a day, seven days a week, possibly for 12 to 15 years. Is it worth it just to get some short-lived attention from potential mates?

Because the breed is popular

This is likely one of the worst reasons to get a dog, with the exception of breeding puppies for profit. First of all, dogs are often portrayed inaccurately in TV and the movies.

Remember the easygoing, intelligent, happy dogs in the Disney movie 101 Dalmatians? Well, the reality is that Dalmatians can be wilful, difficult to train, and, at the risk of offending all the Dalmatian lovers out there, well, they're a little bit dumb. Lovable, but dumb. And definitely not much like the animals in 101 Dalmatians. Most of the time, dogs in movies and TV are also often fairly rare or unique breeds that aren't really suitable to live in most family situations.

Perhaps most importantly, a surge in popularity of a specific breed due to a TV show or movie tends to encourage unethical breeders, whose motivation is almost purely money. For these breeders, money takes precedence over the dog's health, welfare, or temperament.



To breed puppies

Stop right there. Do not pass go. Do not collect any money. Remember, millions of dogs are euthanized every year because they are unwanted. Do you want to be responsible for adding more dogs to the list? Even if you're sure that you'll be able to get good homes for the dogs, weigh the long-term issues. What will you do if one of the homes decides to return a dog a few months after buying it? If you take it back, it's going to be really hard to re-sell a four-month old puppy. Most people only want puppies at about eight weeks of age. If you refuse to

take it back, do you have the heart to be partly responsible for the new owners sending the dog to a shelter?

It's expensive and time consuming to breed dogs responsibly. You need to provide food, shelter, veterinarian care, and training, not to mention deal with prospective buyers, place ads, and try to build a reputation as a breeder. I'd really only recommend becoming a breeder if you do it purely for the love of the animals, and have an almost unlimited supply of patience, money, time, and space.

Because the puppies are free

Dogs are a major drain on finances, time, patience, and even physical health (think lack of sleep with a new puppy), making even a free dog a major investment. Avoid getting a puppy on impulse simply because the puppy is free.

There's nothing wrong with getting a dog for free, as long as you understand the real costs associated with getting a puppy.

The Free Puppy Myth

One of the biggest myths that people believe about getting a puppy is that they can be free. Sure, you may be able to get a puppy free or for a small fee, but that puppy will definitely end up costing you money. The costs can vary, depending on the type and age of puppy you get, but usually include the following:

Food — Costs can vary a lot, but can easily reach up to \$40 a month for a large dog, and \$15 a month for a small dog. Don't think you'll save money on food by buying cheap food, either. Cheap food is full of fillers, and your dog will just eat more of it. Buy a good quality

dog food, and your dog will be much healthier, and you shouldn't be out any more money, as your dog will eat much less of a good quality dog food than a cheap brand.

Grooming — Grooming costs can vary a lot, as some dogs need a professional (and expensive grooming), while other dogs do fine by an occasional brushing and wash from their owners. At a minimum, you can count on buying a dog brush, nail trimmer, and some dog soap (about \$30 all together). At a maximum, you could spend \$100 a month (\$1,200 a year) at the groomers for certain breeds of dogs. All the more reason to carefully research your breed!

Health and Veterinarian Costs — Health costs include vaccines (about \$10 per vaccine, and you'll need a few) and annual exams (about \$50). Spaying or neutering costs about \$100 (your local humane society or animal control may have a subsidy program, or be able to refer you to low cost veterinarians). Your dog may also become ill, costing about \$50 for a veterinarian's check, plus whatever medications and veterinarian care is needed. Older dogs may need teeth cleaning, which can cost up to \$200 a pop if an anaesthetic is involved.

Supplies — Water and food dishes, leashes, collars, chew toys, and ID tag, and a crate are about the minimum you need at a cost of about \$80. Add on an extra \$100 for a pet gate, dog bed, and a dog house.

Obedience classes — Puppy kindergarten is really a must for all puppies to give them basic obedience and socialization training (\$25). If your dog has behavioral issues, or you want more advanced behavioral training, it'll easily cost you about \$150 for a couple of months of intense, personal training.

Boarding — If you need to leave your dog, and can't get a family member or friend to fill in, you may need to

send your dog to a doggy daycare or kennel. Count on about \$15 a day and up.

Why You Should Never Give A Puppy As A Gift!

A puppy is an enormous decision that requires a lot of commitment and time on the owner's part. Even if your intentions are the very best (you may want to give your aging dad a friend and companion, for example), please be *absolutely* sure that the new owner is willing, and able, to take care of the dog.

Often, puppies given as surprise gifts end up unwanted, abandoned or neglected. Even puppies that are initially wanted may end up not being a good fit (they may grow to be too large or rambunctious, for example), and may end up in shelters through no real fault of the animal.

You should thoroughly discuss getting a puppy with the new owner first, at the least. Although this may take away the surprise, the new puppy and owner will have a much better chance of being a good fit.

If you've spoken to the prospective owner, and you know that they do want a dog, you can still make it a gift. Give them a nice card with a note inside saying you will pay for the dog or puppy, and that you'll be happy to help them make the decision.



Are You Really Ready To Get A Dog?

*"Many have forgotten this truth, but you must not forget it. You remain responsible, forever, for what you have tamed."
Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

If you've read through all the warnings and have decided that you still want a puppy, you need to determine if you're willing (and able) to assume all of the responsibilities of having a dog. These questions should help you determine if you're really capable and willing to bring a dog into your life.

1. Are you and your family able to commit 12 or more years to living with the dog? Could there be major, life-altering events in your future, such as divorce, moving to a different city, having children, or having to take care of elderly parents? Will you be able to take care of an aging dog that may have health issues?

2. Does your family (or maybe even your roommate) want the dog? A dog can cause a great deal of stress and friction among family members if one or more people are against the idea.
3. Do you have the financial resources to get a dog? A new puppy can set you back in many ways: veterinarian bills, spaying or neutering costs, costs of supplies like leashes, bowls, dog food and treats, dog beds, brushes, collars, dog tags, and even registration with the city or town. And don't forget to add in the occasional chewed shoe, ripped sofa cushion, or soiled carpet to the expense list.
4. Do you have the time to train your dog and spend time with him or her? To have a well-behaved, well socialized dog, you'll need to spend hour upon hour teaching your dog commands like sit, stay, get down, not to mention teaching your dog that it's not OK to nip at children, bark at the postman, or stiff Uncle Bob's crotch. Even after training, you'll need to take time to take your dog for walks, clean up the dog poop in the back yard, brush his fur and clip his nails, feed and water him every day, and play with him. Some breeds, like Bichon Frises, take a lot of time to groom, and you may even need to get a professional groomer to help out.
5. Do you have the relaxed, flexible, patient, personality that's best suited to owning a dog? It will be much harder to have a dog if you're the kind of person who's a neat freak who needs everything in its place. Dogs are messy creatures, and not particularly respectful of the fact that you want your shoes to be in a neat row in the closet. This brings up the need for patience. Will you be able to keep your cool

when your adorable puppy poops on the living room rug for the second time in a day? Answer these questions honestly — you're the only one who really knows how you'll deal with the disruptions that a dog brings.

6. Do you have the physical environment a dog needs? Most dogs need a nearby park or huge yard for walks and to go to the washroom. A fenced yard is also a huge bonus, as is room for a dog run. You'll need a place to put your dog's bed and dishes, and the facilities to groom her or clean her if she's muddy and messy from being outside.
7. Do you expect your dog to be alone for long periods of a time, on a daily basis? Many so-called behavioural problems simply result from a dog that's cooped up too long inside a house. Dogs that are alone for too long can chew the furniture, chew shoes and furniture, scratch doors, relieve themselves indoors, and bark constantly. You may need to seriously consider that you'll have to arrange for someone to take care of the dog during the day, let him out for a run, playtime, and administer medication, if necessary. Whether this means that you need to come home during your lunch hour, you need to send your dog to doggie daycare, or you need to hire a part-time dog sitter, it's an important consideration in getting a dog.
8. Are you willing and financially able to spay or neuter your dog? Many unwanted dogs are euthanized each year simply because owners were unwilling or unable to spay or neuter.
9. Will you be able to get someone to take care of your dog while you're away? While this is especially true for those who travel a lot, few

people enjoy being tied to their home because they can't find a good kennel or dog sitter.

10. Have you owned a dog before? This is a good indicator of how well you'll be able to take care of a new dog. Did you enjoy having your dog? Was your dog well behaved and well trained? If you answer yes to these questions, it's a good sign. However, if you've had to give a dog away, for any reason, you should seriously consider if getting another dog is a wise decision. You need to really examine the reasons for giving the dog away, and if they're likely to repeat with a new dog.
11. Can you make a commitment to set rules and limitations for your dog, such as not jumping on people or furniture, or will you just let the dog run all over you?
12. Will a dog be happy living with you? This is important. Will you be able to give a dog everything he needs to be happy? It's just not fair to a dog to give it a life where it's bored or poorly cared for. And trust me, if a dog's unhappy, you'll know it through how they act (think barking, chewed furniture, and aggression).

Choosing a Dog

So you want to get a dog. Where do you go from here? You'll need to think about what you want in a dog, and determine what kind of dog meets your needs. Your lifestyle plays an important role, as do the characteristics of specific dogs and breeds.



Borrow A Dog

If you're really serious about getting a dog, borrow or pet sit a dog. To really get a feel for living with a dog, borrow the dog for as much time as possible: a week or two would be ideal. If you borrow a grown dog, consider how much extra work a puppy would be on top of taking care of a dog. Borrowing a dog is especially helpful for first-time dog owners, who often underestimate the work involved in having a dog.

Choosing A Dog

If you've determined that you're really ready and willing to get a dog, your next step is to determine what type of dog you want. Do you want a puppy, an adolescent dog, an adult dog, or possibly a senior dog? Do you want a specific breed, a purebred, or a mutt? Are you looking for a particular type of personality or temperament? Do you want a non-allergenic or non-shedding dog? Do you want a dog that has a specific look?

Be patient, it can take some time to determine what kind of dog you want, research different veterinarians, breeders, adoption options, and training facilities. Even then, you may have to wait for the perfect dog for you to appear. But don't worry, it'll be worth it! In the end, you should have a happy, healthy, dog that you'll enjoy living with for years to come.

Your lifestyle

The way you live your life and your personality play a key role in choosing the right type of dog for you. Some key questions can help you determine what you want when you're choosing a dog:

- Do you live in on an acreage, in a house, or an apartment?
- Do you have a fenced back yard? Is it large enough for the type of dog you want?
- Do you live in an inner-city area, the suburbs, or in a rural area?
- Can you spend a great deal of time with your dog?
- Do you live with other people, especially children?
- Do you want your dog for a specific purpose, such as herding sheep, or guarding your house?
- What is your budget for keeping your dog healthy?
- Do you want short or long fur?

- Do you want a dog that doesn't shed much?
- How long will your dog stay alone each day?

Non-shedding and non-allergenic dogs

If you're considering a non-shedding dog to help alleviate problems with allergies and asthma, it's important to know that it's not dog hair that triggers problems in humans. Proteins in dog skin, saliva, dander, and even dog urine are what trigger allergies and allergic reactions. Dog fur can also collect allergens like dust, mold, and pollen. That means that getting a non-shedding dog will do virtually nothing to reduce asthmatic or allergic reactions, since all dogs have the proteins that cause problems. Unfortunately, non-allergenic dogs and cats simply do not exist, despite what some unethical breeders may say.

If you have allergies or asthma, seriously rethink getting a dog. If you've ever been hospitalized for an allergic reaction or asthma attack, you may even be risking your life to get a dog. Does anyone spending a significant amount of time with the dog, especially someone in your household, or who you visit regularly, may have allergies? Some estimates say that about 10 percent of people have allergies to animals!

Even people with minor allergies can find that their allergies get worse over time, and that they have to give up a much-loved dog because they suffer with constant itching, sneezing, and wheezing.

However, some good news is that dog allergens are often specific to particular breeds. Some breeds produce less allergens than others. Every individual has a unique allergic threshold, and may be allergic to only specific allergens. This means that an specific breed of dog may cause an allergic reaction in one person, but not another.

Given how specific allergies are, if you're considering a specific breed of dog because it's supposed to be allergenic it may be helpful to actually spend time with the dog. You can do this by spending some time at a breeder of the specific breed of dog that you're interested in. While you're at the breeders, assess if your allergies are flaring up. Do not do this if you have severe allergies!

Some breeds of dogs seem to bother allergy sufferers less than others. Most of these tend to be smaller dogs, since a smaller dog has less dander, skin, and saliva to be allergic to. Many of these dogs also shed minimally, meaning that less allergens are released into the air.

Non-allergenic dogs include:

- American Hairless Terrier
- Basenji
- Bedlington Terrier
- Bergamasco
- Bichon Frise
- Bichon
- Bolognese
- Border Terrier
- Cairn Terrier
- Cavachon
- Chacy Ranior
- Hairless Chinese Crested
- Cockapoo
- Coton De Tulear
- Doodleman Pinscher
- Giant Schnauzer
- Hairless Khala
- Havanese
- Irish Water Spaniel
- Kerry Blue Terrier

-
- Labradoodle
 - Lagotto Romagnolo
 - Lowchen
 - Maltese
 - Malti-Poo
 - Miniature Littlefield Sheepdog
 - Miniature Poodle
 - Miniature Schnauzer
 - Native American Indian Dog
 - Peruvian Inca Orchid
 - Poos
 - Portuguese Water Dog
 - Puli
 - Schnoodle
 - Shepadoodle
 - Shichon
 - Shih-Tzu
 - Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier
 - Spanish Water Dog
 - Standard Poodle
 - Standard Schnauzer
 - Tibetan Terrier
 - Toy Poodle
 - West Highland White Terrier
 - Wirehaired Fox Terrier
 - Xoloitzcuintle
 - Yorkshire Terrier

If you're interested in minimizing the amount of dog hair on your sofa and car seats, there may be a bit of hope. While the idea of a non-shedding dog is appealing, most dogs considered non-shedding are simply breeds that

tend to shed less than others. Many of these breeds have less of a undercoat, shorter fur, or fur that's less bulky and dense. Several Terrier breeds, Schnauzers, and Poodles shed less than other breeds.

Dogs that shed less tend to be:

- Affenpinscher
- Airedale Terrier
- American Hairless Terrier
- Australian Terrier
- Basenji
- Bedlington Terrier
- Belgian Shepherd Laekenois
- Bergamasco
- Bichon Frise
- Bichon
- Bolognese
- Border Terrier
- Bouvier des Flanders
- Brussels Griffon
- Cairn Terrier
- Cesky Terrier
- Chacy Ranior
- Chi-Poo
- Cockapoo
- Coton De Tulear
- Dandie Dinmont Terrier
- Doodleman Pinscher
- Giant Schnauzer
- Glen of Imaal Terrier
- Hairless Chinese Crested
- Hairless Khala
- Havanese
- Irish Terrier
- Irish Water Spaniel
- Italian Greyhound
- Kerry Blue Terrier
- Komondor
- Labradoodle
- Lagotto Romagnolo
- Lakeland Terrier
- Lowchen
- Maltese
- Malti-Poo
- Manchester Terrier
- Mi-Ki
- Miniature Poodle
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Miniature Littlefield Sheepdog
- Norfolk Terrier
- Norwich Terrier
- Peruvian Inca Orchid
- Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen
- Poos

- Portuguese Water Dog
- Puli
- Schnoodle
- Scottish Terrier
- Sealyham Terrier
- Shepadoodle
- Shichon
- Shih-Tzu
- Silky Terrier
- Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier
- Spanish Water Dog
- Standard Poodle
- Standard Schnauzer
- Tibetan Terrier
- Toy Poodle
- Welsh Terrier
- West Highland White Terrier
- Wirehaired Fox Terrier
- Wirehaired Pointing Griffon
- Xoloitzcuintle
- Yorkshire Terrier

You can greatly reduce shedding with proper grooming. For many dogs, you may have to brush them daily during the spring, as their winter coat starts to shed. Some other dogs, like Labradors, shed more evenly all year, and may need to be groomed once or twice a week.

Just because a dog has short hair, does not mean it is non-shedding! Short-haired dogs tend to leave lots of individual, short hairs, all over the furniture, while long-haired dogs tend to shed in clumps.

It's the type of coat, rather than the length, that determines how much a dog will shed. Dogs that have both an outer coat and inner coat tend to shed more (the outer coat is usually coarser and longer, and the inner coat is softer and shorter). Dogs with both an inner and outer coat include German Shepherds, Siberian Huskies, and Golden Retrievers. Dogs with a single coat include all sizes of Poodles and Schnauzers, and even long-haired breeds like the Maltese.

Hairless dogs

While hairless dogs, by definition, do not shed, they have some disadvantages that might outweigh the fact that they don't shed. Many hairless dogs need greater maintenance than dogs with hair. Because of the lack of hair, these dogs can be prone to sunburn, their skin can become dry and require moisturizer, and they may become cold easier than dogs with hair. And don't forget, you'll still have to clip a hairless dog's nails, and keep their ears clean and healthy!

Hairless dog breeds include:

- American Hairless Terrier
- Chinese Crested Dog
- Hairless Dog
- Mexican Hairless Dog
- Peruvian Hairless Dog

Long-haired or short-haired

For the most part, this is simply a matter of personal experience. Some people just love the look of luxurious long fur on a dog, and other people see it only as a bother. Long-haired dogs usually require more grooming time to keep their fur free from mats and looking good. So, if you get a long-haired dog, you may end up spending more time at the groomers, or brushing your dog's fur yourself.

Just be aware that short-haired dogs don't necessarily shed less than long-haired dogs. Some owners of short-haired dogs, like Labrador Retrievers and Boxers, say that their short hair is much harder to clean up, as it weaves its way into furniture and clothing fibres. Dogs with both an inner and outer coat tend to shed more than dogs with a single coat. Short-haired dogs with both an

outer coat and inner coat may actually shed more than many long-haired dogs.



Size

A dog's size is an important consideration. If you have a small city apartment, you may want to think about getting a small dog, rather than a large dog. If you want a dog that will cuddle on your lap, a 30 pound dog may be as large as you want. If you're looking for a dog to do a lot of running, hiking and camping, you'll probably want to consider a medium to large dog. If you have a large home, with a large yard, and are able to give the dog lots of exercise, a large dog may be a good choice. If you have small children, you may want to consider that a larger dog may be able to bowl them over and hurt them.

Transportation is also something to think about. You probably won't want to get an overly large dog like a Saint Bernard if you drive a tiny compact car.

You may have to carry your dog if it is sick, or in an emergency. Consider smaller breeds if you can't physically carry the dog you want.

Giant dog breeds

Giant dog breeds are dogs that weigh over 90 pounds, or more than 27 inches at the shoulder. If you are interested in a giant dog breed, you'll need plenty of room for the dog both inside and outside your home. You'll also need to consider the special challenges of transporting a giant breed. After all, you can't just put a 120 pound dog in a dog carrier, and place it on the front seat of your car like you could with a Poodle!

Giant breed dogs generally have a shorter life expectancy than smaller dogs. You can expect a giant breed to live approximately seven to ten years, depending on the breed. However, many giant dog breeds only live seven or eight years.

Giant dogs may also be susceptible to hip dysplasia and related conditions, and heart disorders. They can be prone to heat stroke because of their large size. They also suffer more than small breeds from Gastric Dilatation Volvulus (GDV), also known as bloat, which is more common in giant dogs with deep chests. Bloat occurs when the stomach twists, trapping gases, and results in a swelling abdomen. Bloat is fatal if not treated, and is extremely painful. Giant breeds are also prone to hypothyroidism (low thyroid function).

Disorders of giant breed dogs come from growth that is too fast. This can be controlled by feeding the dog a specially formulated dog food that controls the dog's growth rate, which is largely determined by the dog's intake of intake and calories.

Giant dog breeds include:

- Akita
- American Bandogge
- American Mastiff
- Anatolian Shepherd
- Aryan Molossus
- Beauceron
- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Black Russian Terrier
- Bloodhound
- Borzoi
- Bouvier des Flanders
- Bullmastiff
- Cane Corso
- Caucasian Mountain Dog
- Central Asian Oovcharka
- Doberman Pinschers
- Dogo Argentino
- Dogue De Bordeaux
- English Mastiff
- Giant Alaskan Malamute
- Great Dane
- Great Pyrenees
- Greater Swiss Mountain Dog

- Irish Wolfhound
- Kuvasz
- Leonberger
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Pyrenean Mastiff
- Rottweiler
- Saint Bernard
- Scottish Deerhound
- Shiloh Shepherd
- Spanish Mastiff
- Tibetan Mastiff
- Tosa Inu

Large dog breeds

Large dogs weigh approximately 60 to 90 pounds. You'll need plenty of room for a large dog, both inside your house, and in your back yard. Many large dog breeds are prone to hip and elbow dysplasia, and osteoarthritis.

Large dog breeds also don't live as long as many smaller breeds, with an approximate life expectancy of around 12 years. Their large size often makes them susceptible to hip dysplasia and related conditions, like giant dogs. They can also be susceptible to heart conditions.

Many of the disorders of large breed dogs result from growth that is too fast. This can be controlled by feeding a special large breed formula designed to control the dog's growth rate (which is determined for the most part by the dog's intake of intake and calories).



Large dog breeds include:

- Afghan Hound
- Alaskan Malamute
- Black and Tan Coonhound
- Boxer
- Briard
- Canaan Dog
- Chesapeake Bay Retriever
- Chinese Shar Pei
- Chow Chow
- Collie
- Curly-coated Retriever
- English Foxhound
- English Setter
- Finnish Spitz
- Flat-coated Retriever
- German Pinscher
- German Shepherd
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer
- Giant Schnauzer
- Golden Retriever
- Gordon Setter
- Greyhound
- Ibizan Hound
- Irish Setter
- Irish Water Spaniel
- Komondor
- Labrador Retriever

- Mastiff
- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
- Old English Sheepdog
- Otter Hound
- Polish Lowland Sheepdog
- Pointer
- Rhodesian Ridgeback
- Rottweiler
- Saluki
- Shiba Inu
- Spinone Italiano
- Vizsla
- Weimaraner
- Wolfdog

Medium dog breeds

Medium-sized dogs are about 18 to 25 inches at the shoulder and weigh from 20 to 60 pounds. They make an excellent choice for someone without an enormous amount of room in their house or yard, but still wants a dog that can keep up with them when jogging. Keep in mind, though, that some medium-sized dogs seem to need much more room than you'd expect. The Border Collie, for example, doesn't take up much room when in the house, but is much, much, happier if you have a huge yard, or even a field! Medium-sized breeds tend to live, on average, about 12 years.

In general, dogs of medium size tend to suffer fewer health problems related to their size than very large or very small dogs.

Medium-sized dog breeds include:

- Airedale Terrier
- American Eskimo
- American Staffordshire Terrier
- American Water Spaniel
- Australian Cattle Dog
- Australian Shepherd
- Basenji
- Basset Hound
- Bearded Collie
- Bedlington Terrier
- Belgian Malinois
- Belgian Sheepdog
- Belgian Tervuren

- Border Collie
- Boston Terrier
- Brittany
- Bulldog
- Bull Terrier
- Clumber Spaniel
- Dalmatian
- English Springer Spaniel
- Field Spaniel
- French Bulldog
- Glen of Imaal Terrier
- Harrier
- Irish Terrier
- Keeshond
- Kerry Blue Terrier
- Manchester Terrier
- Norwegian Elkhound
- Parson Russell Terrier
- Pharaoh Hound
- Pembroke Welsh Corgi
- Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen
- Plott Hound
- Poodle
- Portugese Water Dog
- Puli
- Samoyed
- Siberian Husky
- Smooth Fox Terrier
- Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- Standard Schnauzer
- Sussex Spaniel
- Tibetan Terrier
- Welsh Springer Spaniel
- Welsh Terrier
- Whippet
- Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

Small dog breeds

*"What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight; it's the size of the fight in the dog."
Dwight D. Eisenhower*

Small dogs weigh about 12 to 30 pounds. Small dogs are a terrific choice for someone in a smaller house or apartment, or who would have trouble physically caring for a larger dog. Smaller dogs may shed less and give off less allergens than larger dogs (simply because they have less hair and a smaller body). Small dogs tend to live, on average, about 14 years. Some small breeds live

much longer, and some Terrier breeds can easily live to be 20 years old.

Small dogs tend to have some health issues, but these are usually related to specific breed characteristics, rather than their smaller size. Dachshunds, for example, tend to have spinal problems that result from breeding for their long bodies, and Pugs often have breathing problems that come from breeding for their unusually short noses.



Some small dogs can have teeth and gum problems that result from owners feeding them canned food, other than kibble, which some owners feel is too large for small dogs. This can be prevented by buying kibble made for smaller breeds.

Small dogs also often suffer from *small dog syndrome*, seen when they aggressively bark or challenge people or other dogs. Protect your small dog from his own

overambitious leanings by picking him up around other dogs.

Small dog breeds include:

- Australian Terrier
- Beagle
- Bichon Frise
- Border Terrier
- Boston Terrier
- Cairn Terrier
- Cardigan Welsh Corgi
- Cocker Spaniel
- Dachshund
- Dandie Dinmont Terrier
- English Cocker Spaniel
- Havanese
- Italian Greyhound
- Lakeland Terrier
- Lhasa Apso
- Lowchen
- Manchester Terrier
- Miniature Bull Terrier
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Norfolk Terrier
- Norwich Terrier
- Pug
- Schipperke
- Scottish Terrier
- Sealyham Terrier
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Shih Tzu

- Skye Terrier
- West Highland White Terrier
- Wire Fox Terrier

Tiny dogs

*"Even the tiniest Poodle or Chihuahua is still a wolf at heart."
Dorothy Hinshaw Patent, Dogs: The Wolf Within*



Tiny (miniature, or toy) dogs have gained popularity in recent years, as young celebrities like Paris Hilton, have taken to this type of dog. Many people simply can't resist an adorable dog that is small enough to carry around in a purse or bag. Tiny dogs also don't require a lot of room in the house or yard, making them easy to live with. Tiny dogs are about 12 inches at the shoulders, and less than

12 pounds in weight. Tiny dogs tend to have about the same lifespan as small dogs (on average, about 14 years).

However, tiny dogs do have some disadvantages, mostly related to their size. Tiny dogs may not be good companions for people who want to take their dogs on longer, strenuous walks, as their tiny legs make it difficult to keep up with their owners. Some tiny dog owners also worry about their dog's safety when interacting with other dogs. After all, if a Doberman (or really, any other dog) decides to pick a fight, the tiny dog is clearly physically outmatched. Tiny dogs are also more fragile, and their little bones can be more easily broken from large jumps, or even being stepped on. They also have a tendency to suffer from low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).

Small and tiny dogs are sometimes notorious for overcompensating for their size. This *small dog syndrome* often leads to tiny dogs acting aggressively towards people or larger dogs.

Picking up a smaller dog when around larger dogs can go a long way towards keeping a small dog from getting hurt.

In addition, many tiny dogs have health problems related to their small size. Many toy and miniature dogs can be susceptible to a collapsed trachea, which is often first detected when the dog has trouble breathing, is fatigued by exercise, or tries to vomit to clear her airway.

Tiny dogs sometimes have gum and teeth issues that result from being fed canned food, rather than kibble, as kibble can be difficult for tiny dogs to chew. Owners can prevent gum and teeth issues by feeding tiny dogs kibble designed for very small breeds.

Tiny dog breeds include:

- Affenpinscher
- Brussels Griffon
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Chihuahua
- Chinese Crested
- Dachshund
- English Toy Spaniel
- Japanese Chin
- Maltese
- Miniature Pinscher
- Papillon
- Pekingese
- Pomeranian
- Silky Terrier
- Tibetan Spaniel
- Toy Fox Terrier
- Yorkshire Terrier

Temperament

Temperament is essentially a dog's personality. It plays an important role in how easy a dog is to train, if it is highly independent or attached to you, or if it aggressive and dominant, or passive and submissive. Choosing the right temperament may be the most important factor in making sure that you and your dog are the right match.

Trainability

"If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around."

Anonymous

Some dog breeds are notoriously more difficult to train than others. If you don't have the time or inclination to train a stubborn or difficult breed, you should consider a more docile and easily trainable dog.

Above all, dogs, like people, are individuals. You may find stubborn individual dogs in a breed that is supposedly easy to train, and wonderful, easy to train dogs in a breed that is supposedly difficult to train.

For the most part, the list below describes a dog as easy to train based on the ability to learn basic obedience training with a minimum of stubbornness or aggressiveness.

Easy to train breeds

- Labrador Retriever
- Australian Cattle Dog
- Australian Terrier
- Border Collie (although the high intelligence of Border Collies sometimes requires a detailed, consistent approach)
- Toy Poodle
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Field Spaniel
- Australian Shepherd
- Bearded Collie
- Belgian Malinois
- Belgian Sheepdog
- Belgian Tervuren
- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Border Terrier
- Boston Terrier
- Briard
- Canaan Dog
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Curly-coated Retriever
- Dandie Dinmont Terrier
- English Springer Spaniel
- Smooth Fox Terrier
- Wire Fox Terrier
- French Bulldog
- Giant Schnauzer
- Great Pyrenees
- Greater Swiss Mountain Dog
- Greyhound
- Harrier
- Havanese
- Ibizan Hound

- Italian Greyhound
- Keeshond
- Labrador Retriever
- Maltese
- Pharaoh Hound
- Portuguese Water Dog
- Puli
- Saint Bernard
- Scottish Deerhound
- Standard Schnauzer
- Tibetan Spaniel
- Welsh Corgi
- Welsh Springer Spaniel
- Welsh Terrier
- West Highland White Terrier
- Whippet

Difficult to train breeds

Dogs can be difficult to train for a variety of different reasons. They can be independent, or not as willing to please their trainer as other breeds. Some difficult to train dogs are simply a bit slow, and have trouble understanding what they're being asked to do. Other difficult to train dogs are highly intelligent, and can be hard for any trainer to keep up with.

With patience and skill most dogs can be trained well. *Problems with training are generally the fault of the human trainer, rather than the dog.* Most dogs will respond well to consistent, loving, repeated training.

The key to getting a dog that is easy to train *for you* is taking a good look at your personality, and learning about the breed that you want. If you're a strong, dominant person who thinks nothing of dealing with a stubborn, strong-willed dog, and know a fair bit about dog training (or are willing to learn and go to obedience classes), then some of the dogs on this list may work well for you. On the other hand, if you're a relaxed, passive, first-time dog owner, you may want to think twice before getting one of these harder to train dog breeds.

Difficult to train breeds include:

- **Pitbulls** — In recent years, Pitbulls have become notorious for their supposedly aggressive nature, and bans on the breed have been considered in many areas, including Toronto, Canada, Denver, Colorado, Toledo, Ohio, the United Kingdom (with the Dangerous Dogs Act of 1991), and Queensland, Australia. The American Pitbull Terrier cannot be imported into New Zealand. At the same time, many people report that Pitbulls make loving, caring family pets.

The name Pitbull actually refers to several related breeds, including the American Pitbull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, and the American Staffordshire Terrier.

- **Malamutes** — Malamutes are notoriously independent dogs. They're large, strong-willed, and don't have the same desire to please their owners as many easy to train breeds. Malamutes are wonderful dogs for people with lots of space, time, and patience, but they may not be the best breed for someone who's new to training dogs, or with little time.
- **Border Collies** — These dogs are often seen as easy to train, and they are also incredibly intelligent — so intelligent that they can sometimes, paradoxically, be difficult to train. They can easily pick up on small nuances in voice and hand training that throw them off. For example, you may find that one day your perfectly trained Border Collie no longer responds to your hand command for sit. The Border Collie may have noticed that you have started holding your hand up at a strange angle when you give the command, and may be wondering what on earth you're asking her to do. After all, she knows that the command for

sit is something entirely different, even if you don't see the difference. So even intelligent dogs do have some potential downsides when it comes to training.



- **Many rare breeds** — For example, the Telomian (a Malaysian wild dog), the Canaan Dog (originally from Israel), and the Argentine Dogo (developed in Argentina from 10 different breeds, including Boxers, Irish Wolfhounds, and Great Danes) are all rare breeds that require obedience training.

Some breeds can become overly protective towards people or other dogs. These dogs need to be properly trained to minimize these aggressive tendencies. These include:

- Akita
- American Eskimo
- Bulldog
- Chihuahua
- Chow Chow

- Dachshund
- Doberman Pincher
- German Shepherd
- Lhaso Apso
- Miniature Pincher
- Newfoundland
- Rhodesian Ridgeback
- Rottweiler
- Shar Pei
- Standard Poodle
- Weirmaraner
- Vizsla

Some small breeds really live up to the stereotype of little dogs that like to bark, and expect to be treated like royalty. If you have one of these dogs, you may find that you end up your dog's servant, rather than master:

- Beagle
- Shi Tzu
- Pug
- Pekingese
- Bichon Frisee
- Shiba Inu
- Shnauzer
- Pomeranian

Other hard to train dog breeds include:

- Siberian Husky
- Dalmatian
- Boxer
- Great Dane
- Samoyeds

Terriers are generally stubborn, and can turn aggressive (with the exception of Boston Terriers) if not properly trained. They can be wonderful dogs, but require a good deal of tenacity and will. This applies to all Terriers, including Pitbull Terriers, Staffordshire Terriers, Jack Russell Terriers, Bull Terriers, Scottish, Cairn, and Wheaten Terriers.

Hounds tend to be headstrong, and resist handing over the reins to their human masters. However, hounds are rarely aggressive. This applies to all hounds, including Bloodhounds, Bassett Hounds, Coonhounds, Greyhounds and Afghan Hounds.



Do you want a dog for agility training?

If you're serious about competing in agility trials, you'll want a dog that is not only smart, but fast and agile. A slower, less intelligent dog like a Chow Chow would be a difficult challenge to teach agility training. A Bernese

Mountain Dog would possess the intelligence for agility training, but may be too large and slow.

Most dogs will be up to the task if you're just tossing a Frisbee around the park and teaching your dog basic agility tricks. Just don't expect your Saint Bernard to become the next great agility champion!

Intelligence

"You may have a dog that won't sit up, roll over or even cook breakfast, not because she's too stupid to learn how, but because she's too smart to bother."

Rick Horowitz, Chicago Tribune

Intelligent dogs are often a mixed blessing. They can pick up easily on new training, but some highly intelligent dogs may be smart enough to get into more trouble than a dumber dog.

Stanley Coren, in his book, *The Intelligence of Dogs*, measured intelligence as how well a dog understands a new command, and obeys an initial command.

Coren found that the smartest dog breeds are:

- Border Collie
- Poodle
- German Shepherd
- Golden Retriever
- Doberman Pinscher
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Labrador Retriever
- Papillon
- Rottweiler
- Australian Cattle Dog
- Pembroke Welsh Corgi

Breeds also rated as intelligent were the:

- Miniature Schnauzer
- English Springer Spaniel
- Belgian Tervueren
- Schipperke
- Belgian Sheepdog
- Collie
- Keeshond
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- Flat-coated Retriever
- English Cocker Spaniel
- Standard Schnauzer
- Brittany
- Cocker Spaniel
- Weimaraner
- Belgian Malinois
- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Pomeranian
- Irish Water Spaniel
- Vizsla
- Cardigan Welsh Corgi

Dog breeds with the lowest intelligence were:

- Afghan Hound
- Basenji
- Basset Hound
- Beagle
- Bloodhound
- Borzoi
- Bulldog
- Chow Chow

- Mastiff
- Pekingese
- Shih Tzu

Independent or attached

Dogs vary a lot in their degree of attachment to their humans. Friendly, attached dogs are great companions, but may be needy. Attached dogs may have a difficult time being left alone, and sometimes suffer from separation anxiety. On the other hand, more independent dogs will probably be less traumatized at being left alone, but they may not be so keen to cuddle up to strangers or family friends.

Friendly Dogs

If you're looking a dog to be everyone's best friend, these breeds may be a good choice:

- Bearded Collie
- Bichon Frise
- Border Terrier
- Brittany Spaniel
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Cocker Spaniel
- Collie
- Curly-coated Retriever
- English Cocker Spaniel
- English Setter
- English Toy Spaniel
- Field Spaniel
- Flat-coated Retriever
- Golden Retriever
- Havanese

- Keeshond
- Labrador Retriever
- Old English Sheepdog
- Portuguese Water Dog
- Skye Terrier
- Vizsla
- Basenji
- Saint Bernard
- Standard Poodle
- Toy Poodle

Independent Dogs

An independent dog may be a good choice if you plan on being away during the day. You'll want a dog that is not excessively active, and will be happy with walks and exercise in the evenings and weekends. In this situation, you may want a dog that is not excessively needy of your time, and can be happy just hanging out by itself for eight hours a day.

Keep in mind, though, that all dogs need a significant portion of your time and attention. Some dogs may adapt to being home alone for eight hours while you're at work, but no dog will be happy if you're gone for extended periods of time, and may act out.

Dogs that can adapt well to being alone during the day include:

- Afghan Hound
- Airedale Terrier
- Alaskan Malamute
- American Foxhound
- Black and Tan Coonhound
- Borzoi

- Chinese Shar Pei
- Dalmatian
- English Foxhound
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- Greyhound
- Irish Setter
- Plott Hound
- Saluki
- Samoyed
- Siberian Husky

Dominant or submissive

Overly dominant behavior is one of the main reasons owners give up their dogs to shelters. It's crucial you understand how much dominance you're willing to put up with in a dog. Do you want a dog that:

- is completely non-threatening and avoids any type of confrontation?
- barks at strange noises?
- chases away and barks at intruders?
- physically protects you and your family, if need be?
- acts as a guard or security dog?

The ideal dog, for many people, is a dog that is completely non-threatening most of the time. This dog never barks at strangers, and warmly welcomes people into her home, but quickly moves to physically protect her people if there is a real, immediate, physical threat. Unfortunately, this ideal dog is fairly rare.

If you want a dog to quickly physically protect you, you'll probably need to put up with a dog that definitely barks at strangers, and sometimes even barks at friends and visitors.

Similarly, if you want a dog that loves everyone, and never barks, don't be surprised if the same loveable dog turns into a gooey puddle at an intruder's feet, asking for its belly to be rubbed. If you have this type of dog, which is absolutely wonderful to live with, you may need to invest in a good quality home security system instead of counting on the dog to guard your house and protect your family.

Working dogs

Many people want a dog for a specific purpose, such as a hunting partner, an agility dog, a playmate for children, or a guard dog. Your dog's ability to fulfil whatever purpose you choose is strongly influenced by the dog's instinctive behaviors.

Working dog behaviors

Many dogs, especially purebreds, have instinctive behaviors that are deeply ingrained into their personality. Some dogs are bred to bark (generally, to act as a warning), some are bred to retrieve, some are bred to herd, some are bred to protect, and some are bred to point. Depending on your needs, these instinctive behaviors in a dog can be a good thing, or a very bad thing.

If you want a dog for a specific purpose, such as guarding your house, herding sheep, or acting as a hunting partner, you need to carefully consider the instinctive behaviors of the dog you're considering.

Herding, barking, protecting, and retrieving can be deeply ingrained into dogs, and some behaviors are not desirable for certain working dogs. You probably don't want a gentle retrieving dog, for example, to guard your house.

Herding

Herding dogs are dogs bred for the job of herding animals. Although they rarely spend their days herding cattle anymore, herding dogs still need something to do.

They're happiest if they're given a job — whether that is chasing a Frisbee, going for long walks, or any other physical task. In fact, many herding dogs find a job if you don't give them one. This can include uprooting trees, herding the cat, cars, or garbage trucks, or protecting your yard from the mailman. You can save a herding dog and yourself a great deal of grief if you simply invest time in keeping the dog active, engaged, and happy.



If you have small children, and you're considering getting a herding breed, it's absolutely crucial that you understand herding behavior. Herding dogs were bred to confine animals (usually sheep) to certain areas, and move them from pasture to pasture. To get a sheep to move, herding dogs bark at the sheep, and nip at the air

by the sheep's heels. If the sheep refuses to move, the dog may escalate the behavior, and even bite or nip lightly into the sheep's legs. It's unlikely to draw blood (after all, a herding dog that hurts sheep really isn't useful), but sometimes a dog will nip a little too hard and draw blood.

Now imagine a herding dog's instinct when applied to children. Children are small, loud, and rambunctious, and tend to avoid going and doing what they're told at all costs. A herding dog's instinct may be to try to herd a small child into or out of an area by nipping at the air around child's heels and barking. The child, misunderstanding, may think the dog is either playing, or think the dog is trying to bite them. The child will probably yell and run away from the direction the dog wants them to go. The dog will then probably escalate the behaviour, and even bite/nip lightly into the child's legs. This situation can continue to escalate to the point where the child is nipped on the heels or legs.

Often, parents who have no understanding of their dog's herding instinct simply assume the dog has become aggressive and dangerous, and started biting their child for no reason. They may even want the dog put down. All of this could have been prevented by knowing about their dog's herding behavior, and taking steps with their children and dog to prevent the dog nipping at the child.

Herding breeds can make great pets for families with children. Just think of Lassie, who was a Collie, a famous herding breed! You just need to be aware of your dog's herding instinct, and make adjustments.

If you have small children and a herding dog, you need to:

- supervise your dog and your kids
- keep a close eye on your children's friends and the dog (or, even better, keep them separate)

- teach your children not to run away from the dog when it is nipping at them
- teach your dog, gently and kindly, that nipping at the children is not acceptable
- try to choose a herding dog with as mild a herding instinct as possible

Herding breeds include:

- Appenzeller Sennenhund
- Australian Cattle Dog
- Australian Kelpie
- Australian Shepherd
- Bearded Collie
- Beauceron
- Belgian Malinois
- Belgian Sheepdog
- Belgian Tervuren
- Border Collie
- Bouvier des Flandres
- Briard
- Canaan Dog
- Cardigan Welsh Corgi
- Catahoula
- Catalonian Sheepdog
- Collie
- Dutch Shepherd
- English Shepherd
- Entlebucher Sennenhund
- German Shepherd
- Giant Schnauzer
- Icelandic Sheepdog
- Lapphund

- McNab
- Mudi
- Norwegian Buhund
- Old English Sheepdog
- Pembroke Welsh Corgi
- Picardy Shepherd
- Polish Lowland Sheepdog
- Puli
- Pumi
- Pyrenean Shepherd
- North American Shepherd
- Rottweiler
- Samoyed
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Shiloh Shepherd
- Standard Schnauzer
- Swedish Vallhund
- White Shepherd

However, there are other breeds that have other purposes, but are often used as herding dogs. These include:

- American Eskimo
- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Black Russian Terrier
- Chinook
- Doberman Pinscher
- Greater Swiss Mountain Dog
- Keeshond
- Kerry Blue Terrier
- Poodle
- Schipperke

- Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier

Barking

If you want a quiet, relaxed home, you may want to avoid breeds known for excessive barking. Dogs that bark a lot can also be a problem in condos or apartments, or anywhere you have neighbors that won't appreciate a yappy dog.

Dog breeds known for barking are:

- Beagle
- Chihuahua
- Dachshund
- Irish Setter
- Pekingese
- Lhasa Apso
- Maltese
- Poodle
- Pug
- Schnauzer
- Sheepdog
- Terrier

If barking is a problem for you, consider breeds that are less likely to bark, including:

- Afghan
- Bloodhound
- Boxer
- Bulldog
- Collie
- Golden Retriever
- Malamute

- Newfoundland
- Rottweiler
- Saint Bernard

It's crucially important to understand that a large component of excessive dog barking is environmental behavior. Dogs often bark excessively because they are bored (for example, when they're alone in the house all day), frustrated, afraid, or excited. Some hunting dogs even bark to indicate prey. This means that even if you get a breed that isn't supposed to bark much, it may end up barking a lot if it's bored, excited, or afraid. It's also important to consider the individual dog. There are Bloodhounds, Golden Retrievers, and Newfoundlands that bark a lot, and Beagles, Terriers and Schnauzers that hardly bark at all.

Retrieving

Retrieving dogs have strong behavioral tendencies to learn, obey and please, and have a soft mouth, which means that they tend not to bite into birds they have retrieved.

If you want a dog to act as a retriever for hunting, a herding dog breed like a Border Collie is a probably terrible choice. Border Collies were bred to herd, and, rather than retrieving a fallen duck, will attempt to herd it. Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers and Chesapeake Bay Retrievers are among the most popular retrieving dogs.

Other well known retrieving dog breeds are:

- American Water Spaniel
- Barbet
- Boykin Spaniel
- Chesapeake Bay Retriever
- Corded Poodle

- Curly-coated Retriever
- Flat-coated Retriever
- Golden Retriever
- Irish Water Spaniel
- Labrador Retriever
- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
- Poodle
- Portuguese Water Dog

Other dog breeds are often used as retrievers, including:

- American Cocker Spaniel
- Boykin Spaniel
- Drentse Patrijshond
- English Cocker Spaniel
- English Springer Spaniel
- Epagneul Pont-Audemer
- German Longhaired Pointer
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer
- Hungarian Vizsla
- Italian Spinone
- Weimaraner
- Welsh Springer Spaniel

Bird dogging

Even bird dog behavior can be broken down into three types of ingrained behaviors. These include retrieving (where dogs fetch birds), flushing behaviors (where dogs flush birds out of a field or other area for a hunter), and pointing behaviors (where a dog locates birds, and indicate where the birds are by pointing to them with their nose).

Flushing

A number of breeds are commonly used as flushing dogs. These include the:

- Brittany
- Cocker Spaniel
- English Pointer
- English Setter
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer
- Gordon Setter
- Irish Setter
- Springer Spaniel
- Vizsla
- Weimaraner
- Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

Pointing

Setters, and pointer breeds are most commonly used as pointing dogs. These breeds include:

- English Pointer
- English Setter
- Gordon Setter
- Irish Red and White Setter
- Irish Setter
- Red Setter

A number of other dogs are used to point and as flushing and retrieving dogs. These include:

- Ariege Pointer
- Bracco Italiano
- Braque du Bourbonnais

- Braque D'Auvergne
- Braque Francais
- Braque Saint-Germain
- Brittany
- Cesky Fousek
- German Longhaired Pointer
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer
- Hungarian Vizsla
- Large Munsterlander
- Old Danish Pointer
- Old Spanish Pointer
- Portuguese Pointer
- Pudelpointer
- Small Munsterlander
- Spanish Pointer
- Spinone Italiano
- Weimaraner
- Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

Tracking and hunting

Tracking dogs are good at doing just that — tracking. They use their keen sense of smell to track a scent trail or the scent of disturbed vegetation. Tracking dogs are often used to in bird and rabbit hunting, and there are even dog tracking competitions.

Good tracking dog breeds include:

- Basset Hound
- Beagle
- German Shepherd
- Retriever

- Spaniel

Often, you'll hear a dog that is a good pointer, retriever, and tracker referred to as a hunting dog. These versatile hunting dogs include:

- Brittany
- Irish Setter
- French Spaniel
- German Longhaired Pointer
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer
- Gordon Setter
- Irish Setter
- Pointer
- Large Muterlander
- Vizsla
- Weimaraner
- Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

Protecting

For most families, a little bit of protective behavior is a good thing, but too much can be disastrous. A dog with too strong a protecting behavior may potentially bite people that it feels are threatening. This can happen even if the people are completely harmless, but the dog's instinct is so strong that it sees threats even when there are none. In a society that is willing to sue at the drop of a hat, or have a dog put down for biting, this is a serious issue. An overprotective dog may eventually end up seriously hurting someone, even a child.

On the other hand, a small dose of protective behavior can be assuring. As a child, my family had a Blue Heeler (Australian Cattle Dog) named Silver that growled and barked whenever my older brothers got too rough when

playing with me or if someone yelled at me. Any other time, Silver was a friendly, sociable dog, but he could be counted on to protect us when really needed.

Guarding livestock

Dogs have been bred and used for centuries to protect livestock. Most of these dogs have a strong guarding behavior that, with proper training and patience, can be modified to make them good pets and household protectors. In general, protecting dog breeds are large, strong, and independent.

These dog breeds include:

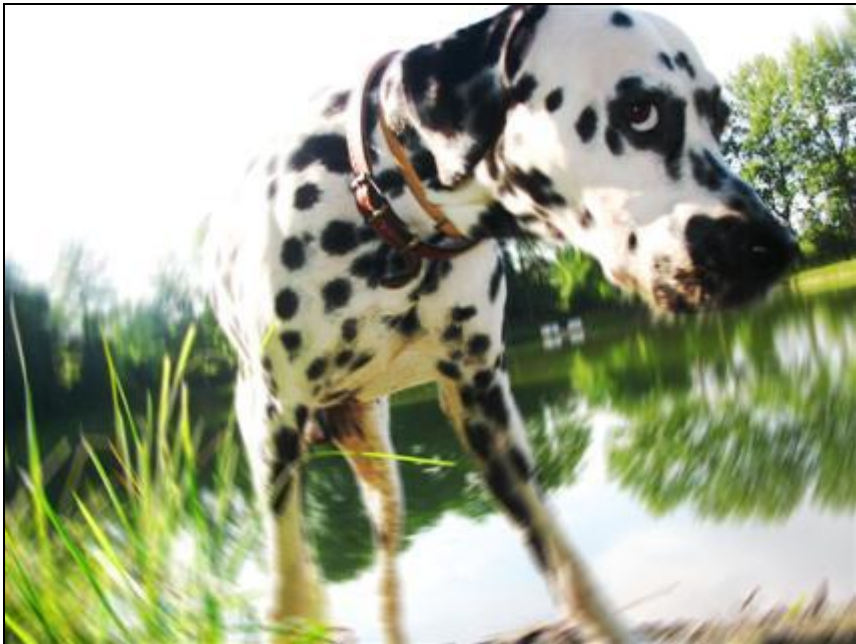
- Akbash
- Anatolian Shepherd
- Great Pyrenees
- Komondor
- Kuvasz
- Maremma
- Tibetan Mastiff

Rarer livestock guardian dog breeds includes the:

- Armenian Gampr
- Carpathian Sheepdog
- Cao de Castro Laboreiro
- Caucasian Owcharka
- Estrela Mountain Dog
- Greek Sheepdog
- Mid Asian Owcharka
- Karakatchan
- Karst Shepherd
- Kyo Apso
- Owczarek Podhalanski

- Pyrenean Mastiff
- Rafeiro do Alentejo
- Romanian Sheepdogs
- Sage Koochie
- Slovak Cuvac
- Sarplaninac
- South Russian Owchaka
- Spanish Mastiff
- Tornjak

Activity level



The activity level of dog breeds varies tremendously. There are dogs that are nothing more than furry couch potatoes and that are perfectly happy to go outside and walk for only a short time every day. Other dogs seem like they're permanently wired on about ten cups of coffee, and need enormous amounts of exercise, mental

stimulation, and attention. Most dogs fall somewhere in between, and need an hour or two of solid exercise each day.

Whether you want an active dog, a doggie couch potato, or a dog that fits somewhere in between really depends on you. Are you the type of person or family that spends a lot of time walking and hiking? If so, an active dog might be a great choice. Popular breeds like Border Collies, Dalmatians, Jack Russells, and many Retrievers are well known to be high energy. Other high activity dog breeds are:

- Beagle
- Beauceron
- Bouvier des Flandres
- Catalanian Sheepdog
- Chihuahua
- De Brie Shepherd
- Drahthaar
- Doberman
- English Setter
- English Springer Spaniel
- Epagneul Breton
- Fox Terrier
- German Braco
- German Shepherd
- Groenendael Belgium Shepherd
- Irish Setter
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Pekinese
- Pinscher
- Poodle
- Pointer

- Pomeranian
- Scottish Terrier
- West Highland White Terrier
- Yorkshire Terrier

An active dog may not be a great choice if you want a dog to just hang out on the couch with you for a couple of days at a time and watch movies, with the occasional toilet break and run around the back yard. Elderly people may also do best with a less active dog, because less active dogs can be easier to manage physically.

All dogs need some exercise, including daily walks and a back yard. Some dogs are just more adaptable to living in a house, and don't require excessive exercise.

Breeds like the following tend to have lower levels of activity, and may adapt well to a less active lifestyle:

- Alaskan Malamute
- Basset Hound
- Bourdeaux Dogo
- Bullmastiff
- Bulldog
- Chow Chow
- German Dogo
- Giant Schnauzer
- Golden Retriever
- Great Pyrenees
- Labrador
- Lhasa Apso
- Pyrenees Mastiff

- Rottweiler
- Spanish Hound
- Spanish Mastiff
- Saint Bernard
- Shar Pei
- Terranova

Dogs with a medium level of activity may do well if you're the kind of person who gets off the couch for walks and errands, but doesn't necessarily go on week-long hiking trips or plan on extensive agility training. Medium activity dog breeds include:

- American Cocker Spaniel
- Bobtail
- Boxer
- Burgos Retriever
- Bull Terrier
- Dachshund
- Dalmatian
- English Cocker Spaniel
- Maltese
- Podenco Ibicenco
- Samoyed
- Scottish Shepherd
- Siberian Husky
- Standard Schnauzer
- Spanish Greyhound

Dogs and children

"The dog was created specially for children. He is a god of frolic."

Henry Ward Beecher

While dogs and children seem to go hand in hand, there are actually quite a few things to consider when getting a dog if you have little kids in the house. Not every dog is well suited to life with children, and not all children are suited to life with a dog.

One of the most obvious considerations is that a dog that will be around children cannot be aggressive. The last thing you ever want would be to worry about is your dog biting your child or other children.

If you have small children under six, you may want to avoid large, high-energy dogs. These dogs can easily knock children over. You may also want to avoid an overly passive dog, as the poor dog will live a life of constant ear pulling and tail yanking.

Families with small children may want to avoid dogs that bark excessively. Barking dogs wake sleeping children and increase stress levels in the house.

Parents with small children may find that they're too busy to have a high maintenance dog. Avoid dogs that require a lot of grooming, training, and exercise time if small kids are in the house.

Keep in mind that you, the adult, will be the one caring for the dog. Your kids may beg you for a dog, but after the novelty has worn off, you'll be the one feeding the dog and taking it for walks.

Dogs can be a great tool to teach children compassion, patience, and empathy, and can be great companions. However, young children are not capable of properly training and caring for a dog, so that job always falls to the parents.

Dog breeds that do well with children:

- Basset Hound
- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Brittany
- Boxer
- Bulldog
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Collie
- English Cocker Spaniel
- English Setter
- Flat-coated Retriever
- Golden Retriever
- Greyhound
- Irish Wolfhound
- Keeshond
- Labrador Retriever
- Newfoundland
- Samoyed
- Springer Spaniel
- Standard Poodle
- Welsh Springer Spaniel

Sam's Story

Many of the tips in this book come from lessons learned from personal experience. Before I learned the importance of the puppy's parents, I went to pick out my chocolate Lab puppy from a local breeder. All went well, and I picked out an adorable, active puppy from the litter. However, I didn't know enough to ask to see the parents. On the way out to my car, I was accosted by a pair of unruly, undisciplined, large, chocolate labs (both of my puppy's parents, it turns out). The mom and dad were almost completely out of control, jumping up on me and my car, and barking with excitement. The dog's owners said "They're just excited to see someone", and I didn't think any more about it.

Over the next months, my puppy, Sam, turned out to be a big, hyperactive, unruly puppy. Despite spending an enormous amount of time training and exercising him, Sam caused absolute havoc around my house (much, much, more than what's normal for a Lab puppy, even). In the end, Sam ended up being way more than I could handle and I had to give him away!

I could have saved myself, and Sam, a lot of trouble if I had understood how crucially, vitally, important it was to assess my puppy's parents, and how important it was to know my limits. Sam came by his behavior from his unruly parents, and, at the time, I simply didn't have the time or energy to deal with a puppy like him.

I made two crucial mistakes when getting Sam:

- not knowing the importance of a puppy's parents in predicting a puppy's behaviour, and
- not taking the time to consider getting a lower energy, well-behaved dog

Adult, puppy, or senior

One of the key decisions you'll make when getting a dog is the age of the dog. When we think about getting a dog, most people automatically think of picking a cute puppy from a litter. Sure, puppies are absolutely adorable, but they are a lot of work. If you don't want to go through the trials of housebreaking and chewed shoes, adopting an adult dog can be a great choice. Don't discount a senior dog that may have a few great years to give you!

Puppy

There's no denying that puppies are absolutely adorable. They nuzzle into your neck, give warm kisses, gaze at you with soft, trusting eyes, and have sweet puppy breath. For many people, these benefits are well worth all the trouble that a puppy can cause.

Puppies are definitely great at trouble. They chew shoes, soil carpets, ruin furniture, cry all night, bite toes, pull down drapes, chase the cat, bark at nothing, refuse to go outside to pee until 3:00 am, and generally disrupt everyone and everything around them.

Many people want to get a puppy because they can train and socialize it exactly the way they want. This is actually a pretty good reason to get a puppy, as long as you're willing and able to undertake the huge responsibility of training and socializing, and aware of the uncertainties that come with getting a puppy.

One of the biggest potential disadvantages of getting a puppy is that you don't know exactly what you'll get. It can be difficult to determine a puppy's personality and adult size. With mixed breeds, it can be especially difficult to determine a puppy's adult size and temperament. Even with purebred puppies, you may end up with an adult dog that is very different than what is normal for the breed.

You should see both of the puppy's parents when considering a puppy (for both mixed breed and purebred puppies). You can eliminate a lot of unknowns about the puppy's size and disposition by seeing the puppy's mother and father, because a puppy is unlikely to be significantly different from its parents. If you see any characteristics or behavior, in either parent, that you wouldn't want to see in your puppy, consider it a warning sign.

Adult

Adult dogs can be a fantastic choice. They're often socialized, house and obedience trained, and many are even spayed or neutered. Unlike a puppy, you know an adult dog's size and temperament, with no surprises.



You can feel good about adopting an adult dog and possibly saving it from being put to sleep at a shelter.

But puppies are cuter!

Many people won't consider an adult dog because they feel puppies are much cuter. While puppies are unquestionably cute, they're also much better at soiling the carpets, chewing on shoes, and getting into trouble than an older dog.

Adorable puppies quickly grow into adult dogs. The little puppy stage really only lasts a few months, and then you'll have an adolescent dog anyway. And keep in mind that all ugly, ill-tempered, misbehaved, aggressive adult dogs started out as adorable little puppies.

An adult dog won't bond with me

This myth is just wrong, wrong, and wrong. An adult dog may take a little while to adjust, but it will bond with you. It will just need time, patience, and love, and you'll have a new best friend in no time at all.

An adult dog will have bad habits

While some adult dogs may have bad habits, it will likely take less time to retrain an adult dog than to completely train a puppy!

An adult dog will have health problems

While dogs do tend to develop some health problems with age, these often won't develop until your dog is a senior. A younger dog or adolescent should be perfectly healthy. If you want to avoid getting a dog with these issues, consider a young adult or adolescent dog. No matter the age of the dog you get, you should always have a veterinarian check her out!

An adult dog will not live as long

All dogs will eventually pass on within about 10 years for large dogs and 14 years for small dogs. It's a sad fact of life that you will eventually lose your pup.

It's the quality of the time you have with your dog that really makes the relationship you have with your dog, rather than the number of years you have together. It's far better to find the perfect dog for you and enjoy them than to get a dog that may not be as perfect that will live just a little bit longer.

If losing your dog early still really bothers you, consider getting a younger adult or adolescent dog. These dogs will still have plenty of years left to enjoy with you!

An adult dog will be less energetic

This is a bad thing? Dogs, especially puppies, tend to have way too much energy for most people anyway. You can also put an adult dog on a weight loss program to add spring to its step and years to its life.

Senior dogs

Many senior dogs end up for adoption each year through no fault of their own. The owner may have died, someone in the family developed allergies, or the family moved. There are even cases where the family simply decided they couldn't bear to see their dog get older and pass away. A large breed dog is considered senior at about seven years of age, and a small breed is considered senior at about twelve years of age.

A senior dog can be an especially good choice for someone who wants a dog that is less active and energetic. Many senior dogs have mellowed a lot by the

time they reach their senior years, and really want nothing more than a little food, short walks, and love and affection thrown in for good measure.

Advantages of Senior Dogs

*"Blessed is the person who has earned the love of an old dog."
Sydney Jeanne Seward*

There are eight key advantages to adopting a senior dog:

1. You'll be giving an older dog a chance to live out his golden years with love and a family, rather than, in the worst case, being euthanized. You'll be able to feel that you've done a good, kind, thing by giving a senior dog a second chance.
2. A senior dog will likely form a deep, loving bond with you. A senior dog knows when she's been given a second chance, and it will be grateful for a happy, loving home to live out her golden years. It may take a little while for a senior dog to adjust, but when she does, she'll be a wonderful companion.
3. Senior dogs are almost always already trained. This means that you won't have to housebreak them, teach them basic obedience, or deal with the hassles of chewed furniture or shoes. One of the biggest misconceptions about older dogs is that it will take a lot of time to break them of their bad habits. Even if your dog does have a couple of bad habits, consider that it will take a lot less time to correct those than to fully housebreak and train a puppy!
4. Senior dogs are mellower than younger dogs. They've been there, and they've seen that. They've had experience with everything from kids, to other animals, to different homes, to all sorts of different people and situations. That

makes them very adaptable. Most senior dogs will probably learn to fit in with your family quite quickly.

5. What you see is what you'll get. A senior dog has already grown into its adult size, and has a well-developed personality. Puppies, and even young dogs, can grow up to be different, both in size and personality, than you'd expect.
6. A senior dog will give you more time to yourself. Senior dogs are less energetic, and won't need as much time as a puppy or energetic young dog. They may, however, love sitting by your feet as you read a good book, or enjoy a leisurely walk in the park. Doesn't that sound nice!
7. A senior dog will let you sleep through the night. Older dogs are usually used to their human's desire to sleep through the night, and know to ask for bathroom breaks in the morning. Puppies and energetic young dogs generally don't seem to respect their owner's desire for peace and quiet.
8. A senior dog will still have the energy to run and play. You may be surprised how young and energetic a senior dog can be when she's in the company of other dogs or when chasing a ball!

There are some potential disadvantages to a senior dog, however. Senior dogs may not be the best choice if you plan lengthy runs every day, or if you have rambunctious young children to bother the dog. Some potential negatives in getting an older dog are:

- You'll have to decide if you're willing to part with your senior puppy in a few years when he grows older and passes away.

- Your senior dog may develop age-related health issues. These include hearing problems, arthritis, dental problems, and blindness. You'll have to think about how you'll deal with that, and even consider how much money you'll be able (or willing) to spend on your senior dog's health. Keep in mind that any years that you can give a senior dog in a loving, stable home will be well worth it.

Male or female



Many first-time dog owners want a female dog, because they think they're less trouble. If you plan to spay or neuter your dog, then sex probably won't make a big difference.

However, unneutered males can be more aggressive, and have a tendency to wander. They may also want to be more dominant, and sometimes challenge your authority. They also tend to lift their rear leg to pee as a way to

mark their territory (you can also expect neutered males to lift their leg to pee).

Females that are not spayed will eventually go into heat. When in heat, females may bark and howl, demand more attention, and attract the attention of every male dog in the neighbourhood. An unspayed female dog can become pregnant, leaving you with a litter of puppies that you'll need to find homes for!

An individual dog can always be much different than generalizations would suggest. I've seen many male dogs that were completely docile sweethearts, and females that were aggressive and wanted to wander.

Spaying and neutering

There are literally thousands of unwanted dogs in animal shelters. An unspayed female dog can produce two litters a year from the time she is eight months old. Each litter can have from four to eight pups.

Eight to 12 million animals enter shelters in the US alone. Of these, only about 14% of dogs are reunited with their owners. Approximately *four to six million* animals are euthanized each year by US animal shelters.

Why you should spay or neuter your dog

Spaying or neutering has many advantages for the dog, its owners, and society in general. Consider that:

- spaying a dog eliminates the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer, and can reduce the chance of breast cancer
- spaying eliminates heat cycles, reducing constant howling

- neutering eliminates testicular cancer, and reduces the chance of prostate disease

Spaying or neutering:

- makes dogs less likely to bite
- can reduce behavioral problems like aggression
- reduces the amount of money that communities need to spend on controlling and sheltering unwanted animals
- can save a puppy from a life as an unwanted animal

Myths about spaying and neutering

Spaying or neutering does not make your pet fat and lazy! Most dogs are overweight because they're fed too much, and not exercised enough.

It is not better for a female dog to have one litter before being spayed. In fact, spaying before having a first litter generally results in a healthier dog!

Purebreds and Mixed Breeds

The benefits of purebreds and mixed breeds can be a controversial topic among dog lovers, and you'll run into people prepared to swear to their death that either purebreds, or mixed breeds, are the best choice. Purebred devotees swear by the reliability of a purebred's temperament and physical characteristics. Similarly, mixed breed, or mutt, lovers often swear by their dog's wonderful personality and gorgeous looks.

While both purebred dogs and mixed breeds both have advantages, the key thing to remember is that all dogs are individuals. You can take any purebred and any mixed breed, at random, stand them side-by-side, and either one could be more attractive, intelligent, a better family pet, or healthier. At the same time, in general

terms, there are some interesting comparisons between purebred and mixed breed dogs. Just remember that these are only generalizations, and that all dogs are individuals first.

Purebred dogs

Purebred dog lovers swear by the reliability of their breeds temperament and looks. A purebred from a reputable, caring breeder can be a wonderful choice for you and your family.

Physical characteristics

One of the key advantages of purebreds is that their basic physical characteristics, such as size, weight, color, and coat are fairly fixed. For example, Golden Retrievers are known for their long, golden coat and size. When you get a purebred Golden Retriever puppy, you can be quite certain that she won't be 20 pounds, with a short, spotted coat. A purebred is a great choice if you want a dog that is a specific size, or has a specific type of coat (for example, a short or non-shedding coat).

Temperament

The temperament of purebreds is often largely determined by their genetic makeup. In fact, many purebreds have been bred for generations to have a specific type of temperament. A purebred is a great choice if you want a dog with a specific personality (high-energy or friendly, for example). You can't say with a 100% certainty that a purebred will have a specific type of temperament, but you are much more likely to be able to predict a purebred puppy's temperament than a mixed breed dog's temperament.

Specific working behaviors

Purebreds are a great choice if you're looking for a dog for a specific function, for example, a guard dog, a hunting dog, a dog to herd sheep, pull a sled, or even a dog to dig for truffles.

The downside of purebred working behaviors is that many of these working behaviors can be a huge negative for a family pet. For example, herding dogs like Border Collies and Australian shepherds tend to have herding behaviors like chasing things that move, and nipping after things that don't move where the dog wants them to. The problem often comes in when the herding dog tries to herd a child, and ends up barking and nipping at their heels (or, worse, biting them), when the child won't let the dog herd it to a specific location.



Purebred health problems

One of the biggest disadvantages of purebreds is the fact that many purebred breeds are prone to health problems. Larger purebreds are often prone to joint and hip

problems, and other breeds are susceptible to blindness, skin and neurological diseases, cancers, and bleeding disorders. Carefully research specific a breed to determine what health problems the breed may be inclined to have.

When you talk to a breeder, ask if the breeder has done any genetic and health testing — a breeder with the dogs' best interests at heart will have tested prospective parents. Health tests now available can tell if a dog currently has hip and elbow dysplasia, which can cripple a dog early in life, or tell if the dog has cataracts or some heart diseases.



A caution about health testing!

Just because a dog tests negative for a health disorder (for example, a negative x-ray for hip dysplasia), does not mean that she won't develop it in the future. In contrast, genetic tests are highly accurate at predicting the probability that a dog will develop a specific disease at some future time.

Genetic tests search for an abnormality in the genetic makeup of a dog. A number of genetic tests are available, including those for Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) in Labrador Retrievers. However, genetic testing is limited to only a few breeds and a few diseases.

Good breeders know that good breeding practices can reduce the frequency of inherited (genetic) disorders. These good breeding practices include testing all prospective breeding dogs, and only breeding those that are free of genes for genetic disorders. Dogs with an increased risk for a genetic disease are said to have a breed predisposition for the disease. Good breeders try to avoid breeding dogs (and their close relatives) with a *breed predisposition* for a disease. Good breeders also try

to limit the amount of inbreeding (breeding closely related dogs together).

Why do purebreds have more health problems?

Purebreds often come from a limited original gene pool, while mixed breed dogs come from a diverse gene pool. Even highly popular and common breeds were originally developed from just a few originating dogs.

Why does inbreeding cause health problems?

Most dogs, even healthy ones, have defective genes in their DNA. For the most part, these defective genes are recessive, meaning that the dog needs two of the defective genes for the defective characteristic to appear. A dog with only one defective gene can pass on the defective gene to its offspring, but the dog's offspring does not have the characteristic, because the healthy gene takes over.

When the same small pool of dogs are repeatedly bred (as often happens with purebreds), the defective genes become more common, increasing the chance that an individual dog will have two of the defective gene. As soon as a dog has two copies of the defective gene (possibly one from its mother and one from its father) it will develop the defective characteristic.

Rare breeds and breeds that are registered with the AKC often originate from a limited number of breeding dogs, because the AKC requires the parents of a registered purebred puppy be registered with the AKC, therefore severely limiting the gene pool. The same champion dogs are also often used to breed purebred puppies. This means that any possible genetic problems in the original

dog population are intensified in succeeding litters of puppies.

Purebred price

Usually, purebred dogs are expensive. You can easily pay from \$400 to \$1,000, or more, for a good quality pet purebred from a reputable breeder. One way to reduce this cost is to get a purebred from a rescue organization, but rescue dogs likely aren't tested for health disorders.

Purebreds vary

Getting a purebred does not absolutely guarantee, in stone, the physical characteristics, health, or behavior of a puppy. This is because some purebreds may not grow up to be typical of the breed.

This can mean that a specific purebred dog does not have the temperament expected, or even that the individual dog's size is much larger or smaller than is typical. For example, you could get a Golden Retriever puppy hoping for a typically social, friendly, dog that loves kids, but end up with a Golden Retriever that grows up to be an aggressive and anti-social dog.

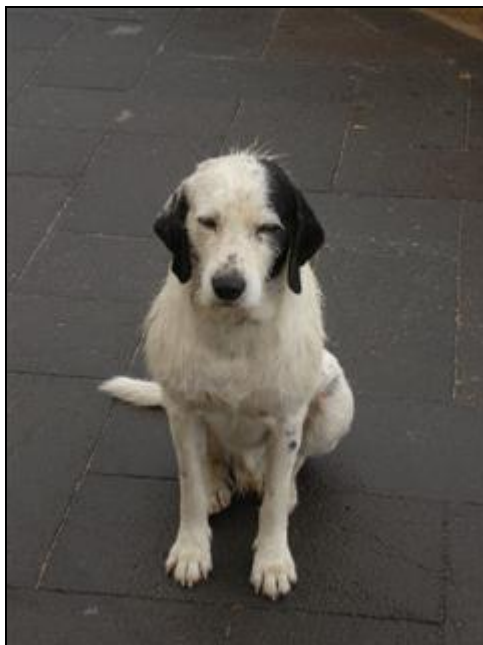
Meet the parents!

Overall, the individual puppy's parents are the best indicator of the type of dog the puppy will grow up to be. If one of the puppy's parents is not typical of the breed, there is a far greater chance that the puppy is not typical. You should try to see both parents of any puppy (purebred or not) that you're considering buying.

The Pros and Cons of Purebreds

Purebred Pros	Purebred Cons
Often tested for health or genetic defects	Generally much more expensive than mixed breeds
Have predictable temperaments	Popular, trendy, breeds attract bad breeders and puppy mills
Have predictable physical characteristics	Tend to suffer from genetic and health diseases due to limited genetic diversity
A great choice if you're looking for a dog for a specific function, for example, a guard dog, a hunting dog, a dog to herd sheep, pull a sled, or even dig for truffles	Getting a purebred does not <i>guarantee</i> physical characteristics, health, or behavior, because some purebreds may not grow up to be typical of the breed — always see the parents!
	Tend to have much more exaggerated behavior and personality than mixed breed dogs
	Tend to be less adaptable and flexible than mixed breed dogs

Mixed breed dogs



Mixed breed dogs, or mutts (as they're commonly called) are often seen as the lovable, goofy dog next door. One of the advantages of a mixed breed is that you can be pretty sure that your dog is unique. Mixed breeds come in every possible combination of size, shape, color, temperament, activity level, and intelligence level. For this reason, a mutt (or a mix of two purebreds) may be a good choice if you're interested in a specific combination of size, fur length, or intelligence. The only trouble may be finding the exact combination that you want.

Mixed breed dogs are not usually the result of breeding two purebreds together. Instead, a mixed breed dog often comes from breeding two mixed breed dogs together. So when people say that their mixed breed is a Collie/Terrier/Labrador Retriever cross, the odds are good that the dog's parents weren't purebreds of each of those breeds.

Even if a dog physically looks like a cross between two recognizable breeds, it doesn't mean that she's the result of two purebreds mating. There are a lot of looks common to many dog types, purebred or not. What you see may simply be simple old canine genes common to many dogs, rather than purebred genes.

Even if someone tells you that a puppy is a mix of two purebreds, you won't be able to tell, for certain, which two breeds just by looking at the dog. Many breeds share characteristics like coat color and size, so it can be hard to tell which breed is responsible for a certain characteristic.

Mixed breed dogs are actually the ancestors of purebred dogs. Purebred dogs only appeared, for the most part, in the 1800s, and resulted from selectively breeding mixed breed dogs at the time. In modern terms, a purebred dog would be developed from breeding two mixed breed dogs with similar desirable characteristics (long ears, a black coat, and a short body, for example). The puppies of these two original mixed breed dogs were then bred together with other dogs with long ears, a black coat, and a short body (or potentially, to their brothers and sisters). Over a few generations, a new breed was developed with long ears, a black coat, and a short body. In time, the breed might become so distinctive that it could be called a purebred.

You can't predict the physical characteristics and temperament of a mixed breed

It can be almost impossible to know, for certain, what breeds are in a specific mixed breed dog. Even a dog that looks like a specific breed may not actually have any ancestors from that breed. That means that there's no guaranteed way to predict a mixed breed puppy's temperament or looks.



What if you know the puppy's parent's breeds?

Even in this case, you can't guarantee the puppy's looks or personality. For one, there are many purebred dogs that are not typical for the breed (for example, an aggressive Golden Retriever). It can also be hard to tell if a puppy will develop its mother's or father's characteristics. For example, a puppy with a Border Collie father and a Poodle mother may, or may not, develop the Border Collie's famous herding instinct. There's no way to tell, at least until the animal grows up.

To top it off, if you don't see the parents, you still can't guarantee they were typical of the breed. A puppy from a guaranteed Golden Retriever and Labrador Retriever cross may end up having all the great characteristics common to both breeds, including a gentle, loving nature. However, if either parent was aggressive or anti-social, the puppies may be aggressive or anti-social, or both.

What happens in the following scenario? You see a puppy in a reputable pet store window, and the clerk assures you that the parents are Golden Retriever and Labrador Retriever. However, the clerk has no way of knowing that the Labrador Retriever mother was, not typically, large for a lab, and quite nervous and timid. In this case, you'd expect a gentle, loving puppy, but you also have a large chance of ending up with a puppy that takes after its timid and overly large mother.

That said, mixed breed dogs *generally* tend to follow the characteristics of the breeds that are crossed. If you know with some certainty the breed of both parents, you can make a rough guess about the dog's temperament and physical characteristics.

Mixes of working and herding breeds can be independent and tough. This includes mixes of these breeds:

- Akita
- Alaskan Malamute
- Australian Cattle Dog
- Belgian breeds
- Boxer
- Briard
- Bouvier des Flandres
- Chinese Shar Pei
- Chow Chow
- Doberman
- Rottweiler
- Siberian Husky

Mixes of toy breeds can tend to bark, and be high strung. This includes mixes of these breeds:

- Bichon Frise
- Chihuahua

- Lhasa Apso
- Miniature Poodle
- Papillon
- Pekingese
- Pomeranian
- Shih Tzu
- Toy Poodle
- Yorkshire Terrier

Mixes of Terriers often tend to have Terrier characteristics, including being high-strung, stubborn, and sometimes yappy. At the same time, these dogs can be bouncy, perky companions for the right family.

Any mixes of the following breeds can be good natured family pets, although some can be a bit stubborn and difficult to train. These include the following breeds:

- Basset
- Beagle
- Bloodhound
- Bulldog
- Bullmastiff
- Collie
- Coonhound
- Corgi
- Foxhound
- Great Dane
- Great Pyrenees
- Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Pointer
- Pug
- Retriever

- Samoyed
- Saint Bernard
- Setter
- Spaniel (except Cocker Spaniel)

Labradoodles, Multi-Poos, and the Like

In recent years, it's become common to cross breed well-known breeds, and label them as new breeds. These new cross breeds include:

- Schnoodle (Schnauzer/Poodle crosses)
- Labradoodle (Labrador/Poodle crosses)
- Choodle (Chihuahua/Poodle crosses)
- Cock-a-poo (Cocker Spaniel/Poodle crosses)
- Malti-Poo (Maltese/Poodle crosses)
- Lahasa-Poo (Lahasa/Poodle crosses)
- Pom-a-Poo (Pomeranian/Poodle crosses)
- Peke-a-poo (Pekense/Poodle crosses)
- Puggle (Pug/Beagle crosses)

If you're considering getting one of these incredibly popular new cross breeds, you'll probably end up dealing with a breeder. Unfortunately, many breeders capitalizing on the success of these new cross-breeds are more interested in making money than in producing happy, healthy, puppies for good homes. Read [*Buy From A Reputable Breeder, page 158*](#) carefully if you want to get one of these breeds.



What if you can see the parents of a mixed breed puppy?

Seeing a puppy's parents is a great situation, because it will tell you a lot about what your puppy could potentially become. A mixed breed puppy from two loving, well-behaved mixed breed parents will likely be loving and well behaved. However, if one of the parents is loving and well-behaved, and the other is nervous and aggressive, you have no real way of telling which one the puppy will take after.

Physical characteristics and health issues can also be hard to determine if the puppy's parents differ. Will your puppy take after the mother's size, or the father's? Will a Saint Bernard/Labrador Retriever cross be huge like the Saint Bernard, or smaller like the Labrador, and will it have the huge jaws of the Saint Bernard, or the more pointed Labrador snout? You just can't tell, and even looking at the puppies can be misleading, because many puppies change a lot as they grow into adulthood. A

small puppy, for example, can potentially grow into an enormous dog.

Temperament and behavior

Mixed breeds usually have much more moderate behavior and personality than purebred dogs. Purebred dogs are often bred to intensify certain behaviors (such as aggressiveness in guard dogs). Mixed breeds are rarely bred specifically to intensify certain behaviors, so they tend to be mellower, and have less intense personalities and behaviors. Certainly some mixed breeds can be highly energetic or aggressive, but these traits are less likely in mixed breeds than in purebreds bred specifically for those traits.

Mixed breed dogs are generally more adaptable and flexible than purebreds. Because their behavior and personality is less deeply ingrained than purebreds, mixed breed dogs can often better at adapting to different situations. Mixed breeds can be excellent house pets, as they can adapt easily to everyone from kids to seniors, and live happily in a variety of situations.

Health issues

In general, mixed breeds have excellent genetic diversity. This means that they tend not to suffer from genetic or health diseases to the same degree as many purebreds. Overall, mixed breeds tend to be healthy and vigorous.

Occasionally, you might run across a mixed breed with health problems. However, this often results from bad nutrition, inadequate health care, or mistreatment than from the animal's genes itself. The exception might be where a mixed breed results from breeding two purebred dogs with similar breeds. If the similar breeds share health issues or genetic disorders, the puppies could end up with an increased chance of problem. Cockapoos are

an excellent example, as they're a mix of similar breeds (Cocker Spaniel and Poodle) with similar health issues.

Mixed breed dogs are rarely tested for health or genetic defects. That means that you usually can't count on any medical testing to tell you about a mixed breed's genetic health issues. At the same time, the genetic diversity of mixed breed dogs does mean that they're less likely to have health problems than a purebred. You just can't know for sure, since the mixed breed probably hasn't been tested.

Mixed breed price

Mixed breed dogs are generally much less expensive than purebreds, and many people give away mixed breed dogs for free to good homes. Don't let anyone tell you that spending less for a dog is necessarily a bad thing. If you see a puppy's parents (or adopt an adult dog), do your research, and know what you're getting into, price has little to do with the quality of the dog that you'll get.

Mixed Breed Pros and Cons

Mixed Breed Pros	Mixed Breed Cons
Generally much less expensive than purebreds, and often free	Rarely tested for health or genetic defects
Excellent genetic diversity means mixed breeds tend not to suffer from genetic or health diseases to the same degree as many purebreds	Popular, new cross breeds like Labradoodles and Malti-Poos attract bad breeders and puppy mills

Mixed Breed Pros	Mixed Breed Cons
<p>Tend to be more adaptable and flexible than purebreds</p>	<p>It can be almost impossible to guess a mixed breed dog's parents' breeds (if any) just by looking at the dog</p>
<p>You can be pretty sure that your dog is unique. Mixed breeds come in every possible combination of size, shape, color, temperament, activity level, and intelligence level.</p>	<p>Because there are so many combinations of mixed breed characteristics, it can be hard to find the exact combination that you want</p>
<p>Tend to have more moderate behaviors and personalities than purebred dogs</p>	<p>Even if you know both parents of a mixed breed puppy, it can be hard to predict the physical characteristics and temperament of a mixed breed</p>

Where To Get Your Dog Or Puppy

You have a wide range of choices for buying your puppy — each with specific advantages and disadvantages. Most people think of a pet store first when buying a dog, but there are much better options, including rescue organizations and shelters and reputable breeders.

Getting Your Dog From A Breeder

If you're in the market for a purebred puppy, a reputable breeder is an excellent choice. You can find a breeder through word-of-mouth referrals from friends and co-workers, talking to your veterinarian, by searching the internet for breeders in your area, or even by visiting dog shows. Whatever you do, get to know the prospective breeder by visiting the breeding operation, and talking to people who've purchased dog through the breeder. See [*Checklist for spotting a reputable breeder, page 166*](#) and [*Warning signs when visiting a breeder, page 172*](#) for more information.

Adopting Your Dog

One of the kindest, most responsible ways to get a dog is by adopting an unwanted dog. Many people stay away from getting a dog from a rescue organization or animal shelter because they think of a used dog like a used car — after all, who wants someone else's mistake and problem!

The truth is that most dogs at shelters are wonderful pets just waiting for someone to love them. They've ended up at the shelter because of their owners' divorce or allergies, the owner becoming ill or unable to care for them or moving, a poor match with their owner (for example, a relaxed dog that only wants to hang out on

the couch, matched with an owner who wants a running companion), or a hundred other reasons that are no fault of the dog's.



Rescue organizations

Rescue organizations can be excellent places to get a dog, whether you're in the market for a purebred or a mutt. Rescue organizations often exist for specific breeds; there are Pug rescue societies, Border Collie rescues, Chihuahua rescues, and the list goes on and on. Workers at these organizations often work for free, purely out of love for the animals, so you know they have the dogs' best interests at heart.

Humane societies and shelters

Dogs at humane societies are often seen as problem dogs that someone's dumped off because of bad behavioural problems and misbehavior. Most of the time, this couldn't

be further from the truth. Many of the dogs at these organizations are there through no fault of their own — their families may have been neglectful, someone may have developed allergies, or the family may have had to move.

Adopting from a humane society can help save a dog's life, as many humane societies euthanize dogs that aren't adopted within a specific period of time. These organizations have a wide range of animals for adoption, from puppies to older dogs, and friendly, active dogs to shy, more relaxed pups. Humane societies and shelters often have purebred dogs and mixed breeds.

Why get a dog or puppy through a rescue or shelter?

1. Many of the dogs at the shelters are often fully trained older and adolescent dogs, which may mean that you don't have to go through the hassle of training them. They're probably already housebroken, and past the stage where they'll chew your shoes and pee on your carpet.
2. The dogs at shelters are a wide range of personalities, sizes, breeds, ages, and activity levels, meaning that you should be able to find the perfect dog for you. You can get an adorable little puppy, an energetic young dog, or a quiet older dog — they're all there!
3. By adopting a dog from a shelter, you may be saving the dog's life. The Humane Society of the United States estimates that three to four million cats and dogs are euthanized by shelters each year, while another three to four million cats and dogs are adopted from shelters each year. In Canada, approximately 100,000 dogs and cats are euthanized in humane societies, SPCAs and municipal pounds. This is

about 4% of the total population of dogs and cats in the country. About 100,000 dogs are euthanized each year in Australia.

4. Dogs from rescue organizations are often carefully screened for their temperament. In rescue organizations and no-kill shelters, the workers tend to spend a good deal of time with the dog, and have a good idea of the dog's history and temperament. You may find this is less the case in crowded large city humane societies, but the staff may still have a good idea of the dog's history.
5. The dogs may be spayed or neutered already, or spaying and neutering will be included in the price.
6. The dogs will have been checked by a veterinarian. Often, this is a fairly short exam, but it should be able to tell you if the puppy has any major health issues, if it's been spayed or neutered, and if the dog has received its shots.
7. The price is right! Most shelters charge nominal fees, designed to cover spaying or neutering, shelter costs, and veterinarian fees. Shelters aren't in the business to make a profit — they really want to find homes for dogs.
8. Dogs from rescue organizations often form especially strong bonds with their new owners. They've been through a deep trauma when they were given up, and seem especially keen to please new owners. Adopted dogs respond incredibly well to love, patience, attention, and security.
9. Adopting a rescue dog may end up being one of the best decisions that you have ever made!

Cons of getting a puppy from a rescue or shelter

While getting a dog from a rescue or shelter can be a wonderful, fulfilling experience, consider that there can also be drawbacks:

1. You may have to deal with some behavioral issues from the dog's past. Many dogs in shelters can be timid, and afraid of people or loud noises. You'll have to learn how to train a dog like this.
2. You may have to spend extra time with a rescue dog. A mistreated dog may need extra training, or simply need someone to be around almost all the time to provide extra security.
3. It can take more time to get a puppy from a rescue organization than a pet store. This is a good thing, though, as it's designed to prevent people from making poorly thought-out impulse buys that can result in the dog ending back in the shelter.

How to find a good animal shelter or rescue

There are approximately 4,000 to 6,000 animal shelters in the United States alone. A good place to start when looking for an animal shelter or rescue organization is your local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) or humane society. The SPCA has branches in many countries throughout the world. Check out www.sPCA.com for more information. In England, the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) offers shelter services under their rehoming services www.rspca.org.uk.

You can also check your local telephone company's Yellow Pages under "animal shelter", "dog shelter", "animal control", "animal rescue", "dog rescue", or "humane society" to find a local shelters and rescues.

In the last few years, the internet has revolutionized shelter and rescue services. The internet allows for dedicated, caring volunteers to more easily connect and get the word out about dogs that are up for adoption. Use an internet search engine like Google or Yahoo to search for "animal shelter", "dog shelter", "animal control", "animal rescue", "dog rescue", or "humane society" in your local area.

Locally

You can find dogs for sale or to give away almost everywhere, including newspaper classified ads, ads in front of the local supermarket, friends, family, and co-workers. Generally, people are well intentioned. They've somehow ended up with an unexpected litter, a stray, a dog from a friend or family member, or a dog they just can't keep, and they want to find a good home.

Just be absolutely careful to do your homework. You need to know that your new puppy was well cared for, and comes from happy, healthy parents. Be sure to ask about medical information on the dog, including whether it was vaccinated, or if it has any health issues. If at all possible, arrange to have a dog examined by a veterinarian, and visit a puppy's parents before buying.

Often, dogs found locally cost little (or are free), and can turn out to be wonderful pets. Just consider that breeding dogs irresponsibly simply perpetuates the cycle of unwanted dogs being abandoned and euthanized.

Pet Stores

Generally, I advise never to buy a puppy from a pet shop, for a host of reasons I describe in detail. Often, puppies at pet stores are bred in horrible conditions in puppy mills.

However, there are a handful of reputable, caring, pet stores out there. Be extremely careful to thoroughly research the pet store before buying, to ensure your puppy will have come from a caring, reputable, source. Some pet stores will even arrange for adoptions from rescues organizations and shelters — this is an excellent sign about the quality of the store, and how much they care for the animals in their care.

Ten reasons not to buy from a pet store

1. Pet stores are expensive for the quality you receive. You will pay less for the same quality of puppy at a reputable breeder by cutting out the middle-man.
2. Pet stores haven't screened the puppy's parents for genetic and health problems, like a good quality breeder would. This means that the cute puppy you buy today in a pet store could be carrying on any number of bad genetic issues from its parents. A good breeder is truly interested in the welfare and future of the breed, and will continually monitor his breeding stock for genetic diseases. These tests are expensive, and likely only a breeder who is more interested in the puppies' health than in financial gains will have done genetic tests.
3. The pet store's guarantee of the puppy's pedigree may not be worth the paper the pedigree is printed on. For example, American Kennel Club (AKC) papers only mean that the puppy is a purebred, and bred from AKC-registered parents. AKC papers are *not* a guarantee that the puppy will be healthy or a good example of the specific breed. The puppy's parents may be unhealthy, or have crippling genetic defects, even if the puppy has

AKC papers. Some puppy mills even register more puppies with the AKC than they actually produce, meaning that the AKC papers in your hand may be registered to a purebred, but not registered to the specific dog that you're looking at. Your puppy may not even be a purebred, even though the pet store shows you the AKC papers! How would you know, unless you'd visited the breeder yourself?

4. Pet shop purchase guarantees are often virtually worthless. Imagine buying an adorable puppy, bringing her home, and then having her fall sick a month later. The pet store would have you think that their guarantee protects you in this situation. But does it? Most often, the pet store will offer you a new puppy, rather than pay several hundred dollars in veterinarian bills. They'll want to take away your beloved pet and replace it with a new pet. Likely, what they'll do is euthanize your puppy, since this is cheaper than providing veterinarian care.
5. Pet store puppy displays give you absolutely no idea of what the puppy will look or act like when it's grown. Sure, the pet store clerk may say that puppy will be no more than 30 pounds when fully grown, but given that the clerk's likely never seen the parents, and has little experience with the breed, should you trust them? One word — no. Even if you're familiar with the breed, you'll have no idea if that particular puppy's parents fit the standard size for the breed. You also know absolutely nothing about the puppy's parents' personalities, which is a crucial factor in determining your puppy's personality.
6. Pet store puppies are often poorly socialized. The puppy from a pet store may never have

been exposed to children or pets, and may never have been inside a house. Good breeders try to gently expose a puppy to all sorts of situations to make the puppy's transition to a new home as happy and smooth as possible. Imagine bringing home a puppy that's terrified of your cat, and hides under the bed every time the dishwasher is turned on. It happens all the time!

7. Pet store puppies often come from puppy mills. Puppy mills are terrible places, where breeding dogs are often locked in cages their entire lives, not fed or exercised adequately, and receive little human interaction or affection. The breeding parents are often euthanized when they are no longer able to produce pups, and females are bred continuously on every heat cycle. Puppies that come from this kind of background are prone to bad health, and are not socialized. Every time a puppy from a puppy mill is purchased, the money goes to support these terrible practices. Puppies from puppy mills often have serious health issues related to over-breeding, including breathing and joint problems.
8. Puppies in pet stores rarely come from excellent dog breeders. Dog breeders who really love their dogs want to meet the families where they'll be placed to ensure that the puppies end up in a caring, responsible home. Reputable breeders won't put their puppies in a pet store, because they won't have a chance to screen where their much-loved pups are placed.
9. Many pet stores euthanize the puppies they don't sell, or send them back to the puppy mill where they're euthanized. Many pet stores will also euthanize a sick puppy, rather than giving

it veterinarian care (which can be expensive and cut into the bottom line).

10. Pet store clerks often aren't knowledgeable about the puppies in their care. Most clerks won't be able to tell you much about specific breeds, especially potential behavioural or health issues common to a specific breed.

Puppy Mills

*"The average dog is a nicer person than the average person."
Andrew A. Rooney*



Don't necessarily believe a pet store if they tell you that their puppies don't come from puppy mills. Pet store employees are not always well trained to spot signs of abuse and mistreatment seen in puppy mills. Often, pet store owners and managers and their staff don't know the conditions that their pets are bred in.

Sadly, the cold reality of many puppy mills is that dogs in puppy mills are often kept in small cages, fed as little as needed to keep them alive, denied adequate medical care, and receive little or no positive human attention. The parents are seen as breeding machines to create as much profit as possible. Many female breeding dogs are euthanized as soon as they stop producing enough puppies. The puppies are seen as little products, and given only what is needed to get them shipped to a store where they can bring in money. When you buy a puppy

Peek inside a puppy mill

The condition of animals in puppy mills ranges from simple neglect to outright abuse.

During an investigation of a Canadian puppy mill, Canadian CTV news reported that Paul Melanson, an inspector with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said "we found lobster traps with dogs inside them, suspended four feet off the ground. And there were feces underneath the cages. The smell was bad enough to burn your eyes initially. We had to let the building air out a bit so we could work inside."

Bodies of dead dogs were left to rot on the ground near the cages. Dogs that were rescued from the mill suffered open sores, there was arthritis in young dogs of two years of age, and the dogs were often barely fed. Veterinarian Dr. Lori Parsons said, "Some animals are going to have some health issues forever."

from a puppy mill, you play a part in perpetuating puppy mill abuse and neglect.

What's the difference between a puppy mill and a breeder?

Puppy mills exist solely to sell puppies for profit. To make a profit, puppy mill owners often subject puppies

and breeding dogs to terrible conditions. Puppy mill owners scrimp on proper care, nutrition, and attention just to make more money. Puppy mills will sell puppies to anyone with enough cash.

Reputable breeders ensure that their puppies, and their puppies' parents, are well looked after. They'll spend money and time to get the best veterinary care, the most nutritious food, and they make sure their dogs are well socialized. Reputable breeders will only sell puppies to good homes. Reputable breeders do not sell their puppies to pet stores.

Why do puppy mills still exist?

Puppy mills still exist despite laws against animal cruelty and organizations that register breeding facilities, because there isn't adequate enforcement. The USDA, which issues licenses to dog breeding facilities, simply doesn't police the facilities. Few facilities are inspected on an annual basis, and even fewer have their licenses revoked.

While the American Kennel Club (AKC) does not support puppy mills, they simply don't have a good way to screen applicants for AKC papers. Papers are given to anyone with the \$20 registration fees who meet the AKC's criteria. Relatively few inspections are done.

Essentially, neither the USDA nor AKC takes full responsibility for the horrific conditions at puppy mills.

The Animal Welfare Act

In the United States, Congress passed the Animal Welfare act nearly 35 years ago to, in part, ensure that animal breeders gave their animals humane treatment. The Animal Welfare Act requires that animals have basic prevention of disease, adequate ventilation and

sanitation, ample food and water, adequate housing, and reasonable handling.

In 2006, USDA has only 96 inspectors nationwide, and these inspectors are seriously overburdened. The USDA's inspectors are responsible for overseeing zoos, circuses, laboratories, animals transported on commercial airlines, and pet stores and puppy mills. This means that the USDA simply does not have enough inspectors to adequately oversee puppy mills and enforce the Animal Welfare Act. Individual states do have their own anti-cruelty laws, but these are seldom enforced.

Backyard breeders are exempt from the Animal Welfare Act!

Retail pet stores that sell animals directly to the public are exempt from the handling and minimum humane care requirements of the Animal Welfare Act. The USDA considers a person who sells dogs from his or her own premises, directly to the public, as a retail pet store that is exempt from the Animal Welfare Act.

This means that dogs are not protected by the Animal Welfare Act if an unscrupulous breeder sells directly to the public! This exemption is just one more excellent reason to be especially careful when choosing a breeder.

A Happy Ending — Sophia's Rescue

Sophia spent five years of her life breeding every heat in a Missouri Puppy Mill. She spent those long years cooped up in a wire cage, with no shelter, little water and food, and no love. She had no name — no one cared enough to give her one. Her puppies were taken from her as soon as they were ready to be shipped and put up for sale.

Sophia's last litter was small, and the unhealthy puppies died. She was no longer useful to the puppy mill, and was yanked from her cage by her back leg and carried to be thrown onto a bonfire, still wearing her USDA metal tag on her leg.

A woman, who visited the mill often to bargain for no longer profitable dogs, happened to be there just before Sophia was to be killed. She scooped Sophia up along with a few other dogs. This kind woman took Sophia to the vet, cleaned her up, and transported to a rescue across the country.

When I adopted Sophia she wouldn't make eye contact, would only shake and slink along the floor boards to any corner, where she tried to scratch her way to safety in the wall. She soiled herself if we got too close and we thought she would never come around.

However, after a lot of patience and love, Sophie is now the boss of the house and leader of our pack. She climbs into bed to snuggle, gives me kisses every single morning before the alarm goes off, she wags her tail, plays with toys, and barks when someone comes to the door. She also treats every foster who stays with us as if they are a lost and frightened pup.

Animals with this kind of heart and forgiveness should not be treated as commodities, and forced to live in deplorable conditions just to make a buck.

There are so many Sophia's out there suffering today... take a stand. Don't buy a puppy mill puppy. Find out what you can do to help them.

Special thanks to Laura Bolle at www.freedompaws.com for sharing Sophia's story.

How to Pick the Right Dog or Puppy

"Happiness is a warm puppy."

Charles Schultz

Whether you get an older mixed breed dog from a dog shelter, or an adorable purebred puppy from an exclusive breeder, you'll need to be armed with information on how to pick out the right dog for you. Often, you'll only have a short period of time to make an important decision for your family.

Go to meet your new dog armed with information from [*Telling the temperament of a shelter dog, page 128*](#), and [*Warning signs when visiting a breeder, page 172*](#).

Pick Of The Litter

So you've tracked down a litter of puppies, and are going to take a look at them. Here are some important tips and warnings to help you make a good decision.

Puppies are cute!

This may seem like a silly warning, but it's crucial to keep this in mind as you search for your new best friend. All puppies are bundles of soft eyes, warm puppy kisses, and wiggling tails. They're happy, playful, and adorable almost beyond belief. It's incredibly easy to fall in love with such a cute package, and make a spur-of-the-moment decision to buy a puppy. Unfortunately, such an impulsive decision can mean that you'll end up picking a dog that isn't right for you. An overactive, playful puppy isn't quite as cute when he's six months old, careening around your living room, and knocking over the coffee table. An impulsive decision to buy a puppy often leads many owners to put their dog up for adoption later in life.

If you think that you'll choose a puppy based more on emotion than logic, consider taking a cool-headed friend with you to see the puppies (preferably someone with a lot of experience with dogs). Tell that person that their job is to keep you from making an emotionally-driven choice, and that you'll need their OK before you pick a puppy.

You can even go so far as to hire a specialist or animal behaviourist who will assess the puppies using a series of puppy assessment tests. Your local veterinarian or an experienced breeder should be able to help you find an animal behaviourist to help you out.



Picking your puppy

The best indicator, by far, of what a puppy will be like as an adult is its parents. Always spend some time with the puppy's mother, and hopefully the father, and take note of the puppy's parents' size, temperament, looks, and any other important considerations.

You can also get some good hints of what a puppy will be like as an adult by observing the puppy and its littermates. Keep in mind that these hints are just that: hints. They aren't written in stone. You may find that an outgoing, dominant, puppy becomes more submissive and quieter as time goes on. A quiet, submissive puppy may bloom as it gets older, and become more dominant.

Don't worry if you show up and there's only one puppy left. Often, a puppy is simply looked over by chance. Spend some time with the puppy to determine if he's right for you...

Top four tips when looking at a puppy

1. The puppy should be no younger than eight weeks of age, although some dog experts argue that a puppy should not be given away until twelve weeks of age. Puppies over eight weeks have been fully weaned, and have learned important socialization skills from their mom and siblings. Puppies learn important skills like bite inhibition and pack behaviour from their mom and littermates at this age. They also become more confident in dealing with new experiences while in the comfort of the mom and siblings. In some places it's illegal to sell puppies less than eight weeks of age.
2. The facility or home where the puppy is housed should be clean, and the puppy and her parents should be adequately fed and watered, given adequate veterinary care, and have sanitary and comfortable housing. Puppies do poop and pee a lot, so there may be some evidence of their bodily functions. It shouldn't be more than a few hours old, shouldn't be crusted over, and the smell shouldn't make your eyes water.
3. The puppy should seem well socialized and happy. Puppies that are not well socialized to people and other dogs and animals can have a hard time adjusting to living with people. Poorly socialized puppies can grow up to be

timid dogs that never fully integrate into their new family.

4. The puppy should be healthy. To determine if a puppy is healthy, examine the puppy yourself, get a veterinarian to look at the puppy, ask about the puppy's parents' health, and look at the puppy's parents (or the mom, at the very least, if possible).

Choosing a healthy puppy

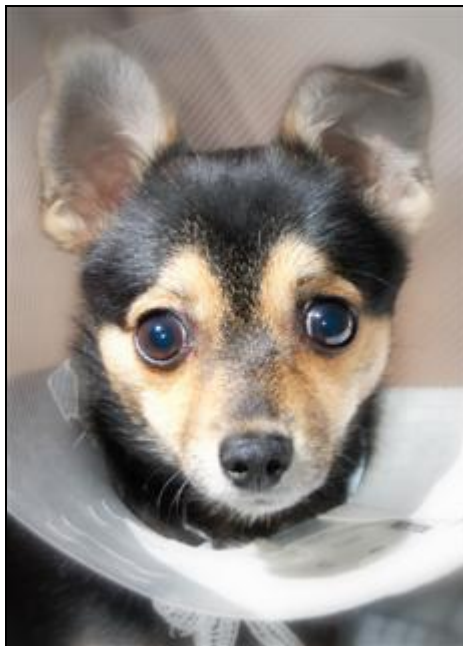
The puppy's behavior is a great indicator of its general health. A healthy puppy should be alert, playful, and seem happy to be with you.

Take your time when you're examining the puppy, and look carefully for any signs of disease. Keep your eye out for anything unusual that may indicate a health problem, such as scratching the ears. The table below gives general guidelines of what to look for when assessing a puppy's health.

This part of the puppy...	Should be...
Nose	Damp and cool. No discharge.
Teeth	Clean and straight. No noticeable overbite or under bite.
Gums	Pink. No redness or blood. Gums that are very pale can indicate anemia.

This part of the puppy...	Should be...
Eyes	Clear, bright, and moist. No visible lines or white spots. No redness or swelling in the third eyelid (the part that you can see when the puppy is half dozing). No discharge or oozing.
Ears	Clean. No wax or dirt. No discharge or oozing.
Head	No head shaking, or scratching at the ears. Either of these can mean an infection of the ear or ear mites.
Tummy	Not swollen, which can mean worms or poor diet. No bulge in the groin or navel. A bulge in these areas can be a possible hernia.
Heartbeat	Strong and regular.
Genitals	Clean. Males should have both testicles. No redness or irritation.

This part of the puppy...	Should be...
Coat	Shiny and clean. Not dirty or matted. No signs of sores or redness on the skin, which can signal mites or fleas.
Body	Legs straight and symmetrical. No signs of a limp. Not underweight or overweight. Stool should be firm, with no diarrhea.



Examining the puppy's parents

If the puppy's mom and dad are healthy, there's a good chance your puppy will be healthy as well. At the least,

you should be able to look at the puppy's mom, but also looking at the puppy's dad will help even more. Look for the same things in the adult dogs as you do in the puppy.

1. The puppy's mom and dad should have shiny, clean coats, and be alert and playful. The stool should be firm, with no diarrhoea. There should be no signs of a limp, or discharge from the eyes, ears, or nose. The dogs should be social and friendly, and seem used to people. The puppy's mother may be *out of coat*, which simply means that she's shed a bit of fur because of the pregnancy — her fur should still be healthy, and she should not be overly thin.
2. Ask about the parent's health. This can include getting information on genetic testing (for purebreds) and health testing (such as regular veterinarian exams or tests for conditions such as hip dysplasia). If the sellers seem evasive, or simply brush off your questions with a "they're both in amazing health, never any trouble", be aware that they could be hiding something.
3. Get a veterinarian to look at the puppy. A veterinarian can catch many things that you miss. If the people selling the puppy are reluctant to let a veterinarian look at the dog, be careful. There may be a reason, such as worms, or another health issue.
4. Is the puppy in a clean, adequate area? Danger signs are feces that are not cleaned up, a really heavy smell of cleaner or perfume that could be masking other odors, or infestation by pests like flies or mice.
5. What's your gut instinct? This is incredibly important. Often, we just brush aside our intuition, but it can often tell us something really important. If something just doesn't feel

right, think twice about getting the puppy. This can be something about the owner, facility, or even the puppy itself.

6. What is the attitude of the people selling the puppy? Do they seem genuinely interested in the animals and seem like they truly care for the animals? Have they asked you questions to see if you're a safe, caring home for the puppy? Do they seem like they're just trying to make some money by pushing you to get the puppy? Are they knowledgeable about the puppy's mother? One litmus test is to ask yourself if you think the people selling the puppy would sell to just anyone off the street, regardless of whether the puppy went to a good home or not. If they would, think twice about getting a puppy from them.
7. What is the attitude of mother and any other animals? Are they happy, relaxed, and friendly? Do they seem to like the people selling the puppy? If they don't, this is a bad sign, as it could mean that the sellers mistreat the animals, or that the sellers aren't really the dogs' owners.
8. Have the puppies been socialized to people? Have they been exposed to children and different adults?



How to tell the puppy's temperament

There are some well known methods for testing a puppy's temperament that many experienced, quality breeders swear by. Other, equally reputable breeders, say that temperament testing is not particularly useful for household pets, and instead rely on observing and playing with puppies to see their individual personalities. These breeders argue that formal temperament testing is really only useful for dogs working in a specific area (such as bomb testing or training to be guide dogs for the blind).

For these reasons, and the practical fact that formal temperament testing is fairly expensive and cumbersome, I recommend simply observing and interacting with the puppy to test her behavior. A huge amount of this is common sense and intuition. Trust your instincts and gut.

If you're going to try to determine a puppy's temperament yourself, it's important to get as much quality help as possible. Ask the people selling the puppies which puppy from the litter that they can recommend. You've had limited time with the puppies, but they've probably spent more time with them, and can tell you which puppy is dominant, which is more active, and so on.

Similarly, take a friend with you who is familiar with dogs. Even better, take a veterinarian, or someone who is familiar with the specific breed, such as another breeder or breed enthusiast.

Keep in mind that puppies, just like us, have good and bad days. A puppy's behavior can be influenced if they're tired, hungry, if they've just had a spat with a littermate, or literally hundreds of other factors. This means that you may have to see the puppies a few times, or at least over a period of a few hours, to get a good feel for their temperaments.

"The most well adjusted pups come out of homes that whelp their pups inside and raise the puppies inside their home. They crate and/or litter box train and socialize pups to all sorts of noises, situations, animals and people."

Michelle McKim, Willowynd Collies, professional Collie breeder

Any temperament evaluation in a puppy is always just an indicator of the adult dog's temperament. The experiences the puppy has once it goes into your home plays an enormous role in its eventual temperament. Some puppies that initially seem submissive and quieter can become more dominant once leaving the litter and more dominant siblings.

Important dominance guidelines

If this is your first dog:

- get a dog that is middle-of-the-road or submissive. This puppy will be easier to train.

If you have children that are under five years of age:

- pick a puppy that is not overly dominant, but not overly submissive. A dominant puppy may intimidate your kids and push them around. A submissive puppy may be too willing to take the abuse (most often unintentional roughhousing) that kids will dole out.

If you have older, active kids:

- get an active puppy that is more submissive

If you are experienced in training dogs, and have lots of time and patience, and a personality that can deal with a more dominant dog:

- consider getting a more dominant or middle-of-the-road dog. You may find that a submissive dog may not suit your experience and personality.

How do I tell if a puppy is dominant?

Be cautious of a puppy that bounds to you and pushes others aside to get to you. In most cases, this puppy is the dominant puppy, which can mean that she is used to getting her way. You could potentially end up with a strong-willed dog that is difficult to train. Be careful of

Often, we feel sorry for the littlest or most timid dog, but this dog could also have a number of behavioural problems. Since most dogs bite or attack out of fear, an excessively timid dog could actually cause you more headaches than a dominant dog. Remember: You and your family will live with this dog for years, so choose carefully!

choosing the runt, or the shyest dog in the litter.

How do I tell if a puppy is submissive?

A submissive puppy often lets his littermates greet you first. The submissive puppy is often pushed aside by its siblings, and may often be one of the last to nurse from its mother. He may even roll over on his back, and show its stomach or neck to other puppies (a classic sign of submission in dogs).

Be careful, however, of a puppy that is fearful, rather than simply submissive. A fearful puppy may startle easily, be afraid of people and other dogs, and cower or shake. Fear is one of the most common reasons for biting in adult dogs, so be extremely careful when getting a timid dog. You may need to do extra work to get a timid dog to trust people, and reduce the chance of the dog biting out of fear.

Testing a puppy for dominance

To test a puppy's level of dominance, *gently* roll the puppy on its back. Gently hold it on its back, using one hand for about 30 seconds. A puppy that struggles fiercely and bites at you is highly dominant. A puppy that struggles, but settles down is neither highly dominant nor submissive. A puppy that does not struggle, and tries to avoid eye contact with you is highly submissive.

Which puppy will be the smartest?

You can watch the puppies carefully for signs of intelligence like picking up quickly on a basic command like *come* (don't expect much, though, as young puppies probably won't have a clue what *come* means). Because intelligence is not likely to vary a lot within a litter, the parents are probably the best estimator of intelligence in

the puppies. If the parents are smart, the puppies will probably be smart as well.

Which puppy will be the most active?

Activity is something that you can likely predict fairly well in a litter of puppies. Simply watch the puppies, over a period of time, to see which puppy bounds around, plays, and moves about the most. This puppy is likely to be the most active.

Which puppy will be the largest?

Size is fairly difficult to predict within a single litter. It is slightly more likely that the runt will remain the smallest of the bunch, but I've also occasionally seen the runt of the litter grow to be the largest dog of the bunch, and the largest puppy end up being one of the smallest.

You can try looking at the puppy's feet to try to determine its size later in life. It seems to be true a large majority of the time that a puppy with large feet grows to be a big dog. The only problem is that there likely isn't going to be a big difference in the foot size of puppies in the same litter.

The best indicator of the puppy's adult size is the size of his parents. Some people say that you can guess a puppy's adult weight by doubling their weight at 14 weeks of age — this is not well documented, but may give some sort of guideline if there's nothing else to go by.

Will the puppy will be sociable?

Watch how the puppy interacts with you, its littermates, and other people. A sociable puppy will approach you, other people, and dogs readily. A sociable puppy will also

tend to come to you if coaxed, and may follow you if encouraged.

Will the puppy be difficult to train?

If the puppy readily follows you and comes to you when coaxed, these are good signs it should be fairly easy to train.

Will the puppy be aggressive?

This is a difficult one. Puppies that seem highly dominant are not necessarily aggressive. They may want to be the boss, but that doesn't mean they'll resort to violence. Be more cautious of puppies that seem excessively timid and afraid. More dogs bite out of fear than aggression. As always, assess the mother. If she seems aggressive, be cautious. Cut her a bit of slack though, since it's normal for a mom to be a bit protective of her pups.

Choosing A Shelter Or Rescue Dog

Shelter dogs make some of the most wonderful family pets. At the same time, some shelter dogs end up in shelter or rescue because of serious behavioural problems, such as aggression or biting. Be prepared to ask a lot of questions, do some homework, and make a carefully considered decision to ensure that you pick the right dog from a shelter or rescue organization.

Questions to ask at a shelter

When you get a dog from a rescue or shelter, be well armed with questions. While most of the dogs at shelters are wonderful pets that are there only out of bad luck (and irresponsible owners), there are a few problem dogs to watch out for. You also need to be able to ask questions to make sure a specific dog is right for you, including questions about activity level and aggression.

What is the dog's background?

You need to find if the dog was a stray roaming the streets, if it was turned in by the owner, if it was abused, or if the dog came their through some other circumstances.

Stray dogs may come with problems such as wanting to roam, or not being used to living with people.

Abused or rescued dogs may come with some trust issues. They may be fearful or overly submissive or dominant.

Abused dogs can have specific trust issues

I once rescued a wonderful Border Collie (Oreo) from a neglectful, abusive, older man with large glasses and a beard. Oreo was a delightful dog, and friendly with both children and adults, but would bark and try to hide behind me when we'd see an older man with large glasses and a beard. It took a lot of work and almost inexhaustible patience to get her comfortable with men who looked like her old owner.

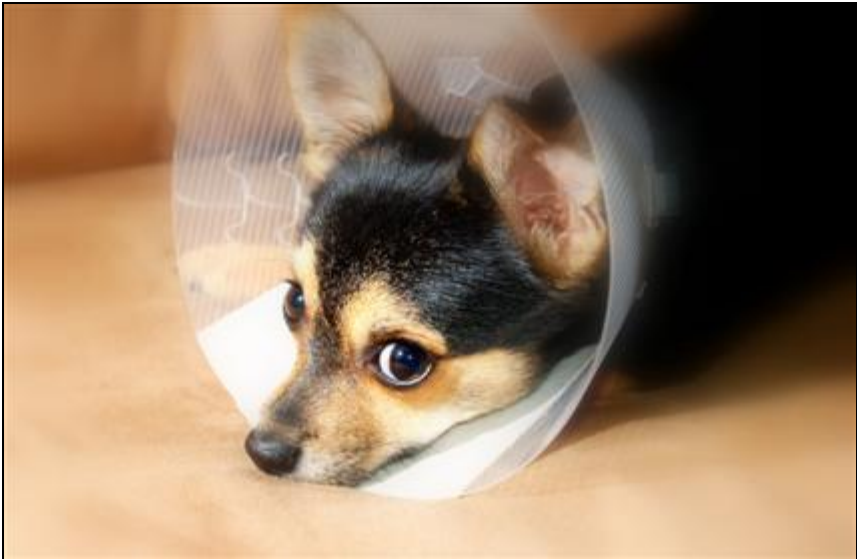
Why is the dog up for adoption?

This is especially important for dogs that have been surrendered by their owners. These dogs may have been too active or aggressive for their old owners or chewed shoes and destroyed furniture. You'll need to carefully assess if these are issues that you have the skill, patience, and time to adjust. Always ask the people at the shelter their opinion — they're well experienced and interested in finding a good fit for both you and the dog. Be especially careful with dogs that are reported to have aggression problems.

Is the dog healthy?

Most shelters will not adopt a dog that is not in good health, but you should ask about a veterinarian check-up anyway. Also ask about other health issues, such as hip dysplasia, cataracts, diabetes, or thyroid issues. You should also ask if the dog is spayed or neutered. If the dog is not spayed or neutered, the shelter or rescue will probably require that you spay or neuter the dog.

Don't automatically disregard a dog with a medical issue that can be easily treated. Such a dog may be a wonderful pet. However, make sure that you can take care of a dog that has specific medical needs.



Is the dog good with children and other pets?

This is crucial if you happen to have kids and another dog or cat. You should also ask this question if you don't have kids or another pet. Your dog will probably see other dogs on a regular basis, and kids are well known for running up and petting strange dogs. The last thing you want is for your dog to be aggressive toward other dogs, or nip at a child.

Telling the temperament of a shelter dog

Another important step when at the shelter is to try to determine the dog's temperament as best as you can. Asking the shelter workers about the dog's temperament is a great first step, as they've had a bit of time to observe how the dog interacts with people and other dogs. Ask the shelter workers if the dog:

- is aggressive with people. Has it nipped at anyone or bitten anyone? Does it growl at shelter workers or visitors?
- is aggressive with other animals. Is the dog aggressive with the dogs and cats in the shelter?
- is shy and afraid. Does it cower in its cage when approached?
- allows itself to be handled. For example, does dog willingly let its coat be brushed and nails trimmed?
- is overly possessive of its food dish. Does the dog bark or try to bite if someone approaches when it's eating?

While asking the shelter workers about their observations is helpful, you also need to try to gauge the dog's temperament for yourself. The following guidelines are designed to give you a general idea of how a dog will behave around people, and if the dog has a tendency to be aggressive. However, they are only guidelines, and can't tell you with absolute certainty how the dog will behave in your home.

First impressions count

Approach the dog in a friendly manner: slowly, maintaining brief eye contact, and speak calmly and in a friendly tone. Watch how the dog reacts. Does it rush at you, and try to bite you or the kennel wire? Does it cower in the corner? Or does it approach you, in a non-threatening way, to try to be petted?

If you're fairly sure the dog is friendly, place your hand on the door of the kennel. Be careful here! There's always a chance the dog may bite at you!

This reaction...	Means...
The dog nips or bites at you	This is a strong sign the dog is aggressive. You may want to consider another, less aggressive dog.
Brushes up against the kennel to be petted, or approaches in a friendly, non-threatening way	This is a good sign that dog is friendly, and likes attention from humans. This may be a good dog for you.
The dog does not appear interested	Don't be too disheartened. It may simply be that the dog is depressed and unhappy in the kennel. Wouldn't you be unhappy being cooped up in a shelter? The dog may have started to give up on people. This dog may easily be brought around by love and attention, assuming that it doesn't have any real aggressive tendencies.

This reaction...	Means...
<p>The dog shakes, or tries to hide</p>	<p>The dog may have been traumatized, or is simply the type of dog that is afraid in new situations, and of new people. Use a bit of caution with a timid dog, as many dog bites are based out of fear, rather than aggression. Continue to approach this dog in a friendly, non-threatening manner. Give a fearful dog the time and space it needs to get used to you.</p>

Dominant or submissive?

Now that you've got a fairly good idea of the dog's initial reaction (and temperament), you can test to see how the dog reacts to dominant behavior on your part. Dogs see prolonged staring and eye contact as a dominant behavior, so their reaction to eye contact tells you how strongly they need to be the head of the pack. To test this, simply stare at the dog. Try to make eye contact, keep your eyes open, and lean toward the kennel.

This reaction...	Means...
<p>The dog goes ballistic, barking, growling, and trying to bite at you</p>	<p>This is a dog that likes to be dominant, and is showing some serious signs of aggression. You should avoid getting this dog.</p>
<p>The dog bristles (you can see the fur on its back start to form a ridge), and gives a low growl</p>	<p>This is a sign of aggression and fear. You should avoid getting this dog.</p>
<p>The dog does not react</p>	<p>This is a generally a good sign. The dog is probably neither highly dominant nor submissive, and should be a good fit with most people.</p>
<p>The dog approaches you to be petted, or in a friendly manner</p>	<p>A good sign. The dog seems to want to please, but is not overly dominant or submissive.</p>
<p>The dog goes ballistic, barking, growling, and trying to bite at you</p>	<p>This is a dog that likes to be dominant, and is showing some serious signs of aggression. You should avoid getting this dog.</p>

This reaction...	Means...
The dog bristles (you can see the fur on its back start to form a ridge), and gives a low growl	This is a sign of aggression and fear. You should avoid getting this dog.

Out of the kennel

The next step is to get closer to the dog out of the kennel. Spend a bit of time speaking calmly to the dog before you open the door.

If the dog has shown repeated aggression early, I advise against taking it out of the kennel to be handled.

This test gives you an idea of how the dog reacts to being touched. Pet the dog's fur, rub its ears, rub its tummy, and touch its feet and tail. Give it basic commands (sit, down, roll over, stay, and even shake-a-paw) to see if it already knows any commands. Watch the dog for signs of aggression and dominance.

You can also do a test to check the dog's level of activity and excitability. Play with the dog to try to get him excited (throw a ball, toss a Frisbee, run with him, and so on). After you're done, try to get the dog to calm down (this will give you an idea of how energetic and how excitable the dog is).

Separation anxiety

Place the dog back in the kennel. Now, test to see how the dog reacts to a separation from you. Walk away from the kennel. If the dog seems highly upset, whining at the kennel door, barking, and trying to get your attention, you should take note. This type of dog may show a high

degree of separation anxiety at home, and be the type of dog that destroys your house as soon as you leave to go for work. Don't be hurt if a dog does not seem to be upset when you leave. This may be a good sign, as it indicates that the dog does not suffer from a high degree of separation anxiety.

The final aggression test

Now, you can test to see how the dog reacts to something threatening. Move quickly toward the kennel, and shout loudly. This will give you an idea of how the dog will react in a threatening situation. Beware of a dog that reacts highly aggressively, or is extremely fearful. Either dog may pose a biting danger¹.

Do you have other pets (the cat test)?



Important!

Be sure that the dog is securely constrained by a leash and collar before attempting this test.

Many shelters will be happy to let you borrow a calm, well experienced cat to test the dog's behavior around other pets (under their supervision, in the shelter, of course). Keep a strong grip on the dog's leash in case the dog lunges. Watch how the dog reacts to the cat. Any sign of aggression (including growling, biting, or barking aggressively) is a bad sign. Fear may also be a bad sign, as many dogs bite out of fear. Ideally, what you're looking for is a friendly disinterest. A dog that is too friendly may end up getting scratched by a cat that doesn't quite understand its intentions are good.

¹These tests are adapted from behavioral assessment tests developed by The Rottweiler Rescue Society (Ontario) Canada and John Rogerson, Blue Cross, Britain, and the Miniature Pinscher Service.

If you're having a hard time judging a dog's temperament, or you simply don't feel confident in your abilities, consider getting someone else to come with you. A friend or family member with a lot of experience with dogs, and who knows what you're looking for in a dog, is ideal. You can even go so far as to get an animal behaviorist to go with you and help you assess the dogs. Your local veterinarian or a good dog trainer should be able to give you a referral to an animal behaviorist.

Picking A Local Adult Dog

Getting an adult dog through local classified ads, contacts with friends, family or co-workers, or even a bulletin board can be a good way to get your new family pet. Many people will try to give a dog away themselves, before sending it to a shelter, so you may be helping to keep a dog out of the shelter system.

You'll need to do some careful homework if you're considering getting a dog from a local source. However, one of the biggest advantages of getting a dog locally is that you'll be able to ask lots of questions of the people who should know the dog best — people who've lived with the dog.



If possible, ask questions to determine if the dog or puppy:

- has been well cared for
- comes from happy, healthy parents
- is a good fit for you in terms of temperament
- has ever been aggressive
- is good with children and other pets
- has a history of biting
- has any other behavioural issues, such as barking, or destroying the house when left alone

The person giving the dog away may be so keen to find a good home for the dog that they'll gloss over the dog's faults (and may even lie). Keep an ear out for any inconsistencies in what you're told, and be wary of anyone who says a dog has no real faults.

Be sure to ask about medical information on the dog, including if it is vaccinated, or if it has any health issues. If at all possible, arrange to have a dog examined by a veterinarian. When you go to the veterinarian, you can ask for a basic blood chemistry work-up, a fecal and urine analysis, and a general overview of the dog's health. You can also ask the veterinarian to ask for specific problems if the dog's breed is susceptible to problems like hip dysplasia.

Tell the temperament of a local dog

You can tell the temperament of a dog from a local source in the same way as with a shelter dog. Asking the person giving the dog away about the dog's temperament is a great first step. Ask if the dog:

- is aggressive with people or other animals. Does the dog bark or bite?
- is overly possessive of its food dish. Does the dog bark or try to bite if someone approaches when it's eating?

While asking about the dog's temperament is helpful, you should also try to determine the dog's temperament yourself. The guidelines below should give you an idea of the dog's tendency toward aggression and dominance, but they can't tell you with absolute certainty how the dog will behave in your home.

If you aren't confident in your ability to judge the dog's temperament, ask someone to come with you. A person who is experienced with dogs, and who knows you well, is a good choice.

First contact

Watch how the dog reacts when you first come into its general area. Does the dog rush at you, bite or nip at you, cower in the corner, or approach you to be petted?

Approach the dog slowly, maintaining brief eye contact, and speak calmly and in a friendly voice.

If the dog...	This means...
Nips or bites	<p>The dog is highly aggressive or fearful. Unless you're willing to spend a great deal of time training the dog out of this behaviour, consider a less aggressive dog.</p>
Approaches in a friendly, non-threatening way	<p>That dog is friendly, and likes attention from humans. This may be a great dog for you.</p>
Does not appear interested	<p>A variety of things. The dog could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depressed and unhappy • calm, and used to strangers <p>This jury is still out on this dog.</p>
Shakes, or tries to hide	<p>The dog may have been traumatized, or is afraid in new situations, and of new people.</p> <p>Use a bit of caution with this dog, as a lot of dog bites are based out of fear. Give the dog the time and space it needs to get used to you.</p>

If the dog...	This means...
<p>Seems interested, but does not approach</p>	<p>A variety of things. The dog could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a friendly dog that just needs a bit of time to warm up to someone new • an aggressive dog that takes a bit of time to assess someone before deciding to act aggressively <p>The jury is still out on this dog.</p>

Dominant or submissive?

Next, you can test to see if the dog has tendencies to dominance or submission. Dogs see prolonged staring and eye contact as a dominant behavior, so their reaction will tell you how strongly they need to be the head of the pack. Simply stare at the dog, make eye contact, and keep your eyes open.

If the dog...	This means...
<p>Barks, growls, and tries to bite at you</p>	<p>The dog is dominant. The dog is also showing some serious signs of aggression. Consider carefully if you're up to the challenge of dealing with a dominant and possibly aggressive dog.</p>

If the dog...	This means...
<p>Growls and the fur on the dog’s back start to form a ridge</p>	<p>The dog may be aggressive and fearful. Are you’re up to the challenge of dealing with a possibly aggressive and fearful dog?</p>
<p>Does not react</p>	<p>The dog is probably neither highly dominant nor submissive, and should be a pretty good fit with most people.</p>
<p>Approaches in a friendly manner</p>	<p>The dog is not overly dominant or submissive and wants to please. This is likely a good dog to pick.</p>
<p>Shakes or tries to hide</p>	<p>The dog is afraid. Many dogs bite out of fear, so use some caution when dealing with this dog.</p> <p>The dog may have been abused, or may simply be timid by nature.</p> <p>Many fearful dogs learn to love and be trust people, over time, with a lot of patience and affection. Do you have the time and patience to teach a fearful dog to trust again?</p>

If the dog...	This means...
<p>Rolls over on its back and exposes its stomach, but is not fearful</p>	<p>The dog is highly submissive. Submissive dogs can be wonderful if you want a dog that can be easily trained and that wants to please you.</p> <p>A highly submissive dog may not be the best choice if you have rambunctious children, who may be more than the dog can handle.</p>

Cuddle time

If the dog hasn't shown any aggressive tendencies, it's time to get closer. Getting closer gives you an idea of how the dog reacts to being touched.

Pet the dog's fur, rub its ears and tummy, and touch its feet and tail. Give it basic commands (sit, down, roll over, and stay) to see if it knows any commands. Watch for aggression and dominance.

You can also do a test to check the dog's level of activity. Play by throwing a ball or a Frisbee, or run with her. Try to get the dog to relax afterward. This will give you an idea of the dog's energy level and excitability.

Now, test to see how the dog reacts to a separation. Pretend to leave the area, and even go so far as to close a gate or door behind you and walk toward your car. A dog that whines and barks may have a high degree of separation anxiety. This dog may destroy your house when you go out for the evening.

If the dog is not upset when you leave, this may be a fairly good sign. The dog probably does not suffer from a high degree of separation anxiety.

Other pets

If there is another cat or dog in the area, watch how the dog reacts to the cat. Growling, biting, or barking aggressively are bad signs. Fear may also be a bad sign, as many dogs bite out of fear. Friendly disinterest is one of the best reactions.

A test run

If you like the dog, but you're not entirely sure he's the right fit, ask the person giving the dog away if you could keep the dog for a few days as a trial. This may give you a good idea of how the dog will fit into your home. Keep in mind that this is a lot to ask of the dog, however, as he may take some time to adjust, and may not be on his best behaviour during a trial run.

Be sure that the dog is secured by a leash and collar when bringing it into your home for the first time. Make sure that children and other pets are quiet, and introduce the new dog to them slowly and calmly.

Adopting An Abused Or Neglected Dog

Shelters and rescues often take in dogs that are victims of abuse or neglect. If you're considering adopting one of these dogs, you'll need to invest a lot more time and patience than you would with a dog that hasn't suffered such severe traumas. Abused or neglected dogs often simply need love, patience, and a skilled hand to bring them around.

Many of these dogs can surprise you, and become the most loving, affectionate companions. However, some have a hard time overcoming their abusive past and never really learn to completely trust humans again.



Dandy — Happy and healthy in his forever home.

Lynette tells Dandy's story

Six years ago I adopted a dog that was one of the worst cases of abuse and neglect that I've ever seen.

When Dandy and his five brothers came to the attention of animal rescue, they were matted with urine and feces and huddled together like a litter of newborn puppies in the back of a small kennel. They were emaciated and had no positive human interaction. At six months old, Dandy weighed only 14 pounds. You could count his ribs.

In the next two weeks, Shorewood Cocker Rescue groomed and socialized the dogs, and got them inspected by a vet, neutered, and given up-to-date vaccinations.

Dandy was so scared the first few days that he hid behind a chair, shaking from fear, and could barely be coaxed out. After a while, he came out to see us, but would just stand by and watch us. Then his tail started wagging and he started playing! After a few months, you couldn't tell that Dandy shook in fear when he saw a person.

Last year Dandy took his Canine Good Citizenship class and passed, and today he's an AKC Certified Canine Good Citizen! This winter he's going to take the Therapy Dog Class because a dog this fantastic shouldn't be wasted. He is great! Everyone who meets Dandy loves him.

I've now had Dandy for six and a half years and couldn't imagine what either of our lives would have been like if we hadn't found each other. Yes, I've been good for him and his self-esteem, but he's been even better for me. Dandy and I decided to stay involved in rescue and have fostered countless dogs over the years.

Thank goodness for dog rescue or else Dandy would have never been given a chance at a real life with a forever home.

Lynette Wirtz, Madison, WI

You've Decided On A Mixed Breed

Congratulations! A mixed breed dog can be a fantastic addition to your family. Mixed breed dogs come in an incredible diversity of sizes, colors, temperaments, and even prices. You may spend a bit longer looking for the perfect combination for you than if you'd chosen to get a purebred, but the results are sure to be worthwhile.

Where To You Get Your Mixed Breed

While most people who want a purebred go to a specialized breeder, you have many more options if you're looking for a mixed breed puppy or adult dog.

Rescue organization or shelter

A rescue organization or shelter can be a great place to get your mixed breed. Shelters house many types of dogs, but if you're patient, they may have exactly the age and type of dog that you want. You'll probably need to spend some time checking out the organization's website, and may even need to make a few trips to find the dog you want. See [*Choosing A Shelter Or Rescue Dog, page 125*](#) for more information.

Pet store

A reputable, caring, breeder wants to know that their puppies will go to good homes. Generally, only a breeder who cares more about money than the welfare of their dogs will sell puppies through a pet store.

Puppies in many pet stores come from overcrowded puppy mills that keep their dogs in deplorable conditions.

Pet store tips

If you must buy a puppy at a pet store, be sure to ask the staff for the puppy's registration papers. If the place of birth is not a local address, this probably means that the puppy has been transported from a breeding facility (which is most often a nicer word for a puppy mill). If the store won't let you see the registration papers, or makes excuses, it is almost certain that the puppy came from a puppy mill.

Please read [*Ten reasons not to buy from a pet store, page 104*](#) before getting your mixed breed from a pet store.

Breeders

If you want a mixed breed puppy, you probably won't get your puppy from a breeder. Breeders usually only sell purebred dogs, or some specific breed combinations, such as Cockapoos (Cocker Spaniel/Poodle crosses). This means that when you look for a mixed breed puppy, you may end up looking at puppies in someone's kitchen or basement, so you'll really need to know what to look for.

If you're considering a popular new cross-breed (such as a Labradoodle or Malti-Poo) you may well end up getting your puppy through a breeder.



Read [*Checklist for spotting a reputable breeder*](#), page [*166*](#) to help you pick a good breeder if you're interested in one of the newer, popular, cross-breeds like Cockapoos or Labradoodles. Knowing how to spot a bad breeder could save you an expensive, heart-breaking experience!

Locally

There are many dogs and puppies available through local newspaper ads, bulletin boards, or by word-of-mouth through friends, co-workers or personal contacts.

This can be a fantastic way to get a great dog. Just make sure that you find out why the dog is being given away, and ask a ton of questions. The best way to approach getting a dog this way is as if you were getting the dog through a rescue or shelter, although you will likely have the advantage of being able to see the dog's current environment.

You've Decided On A Purebred

Congratulations! A purebred dog can be a wonderful companion and friend. Purebreds have highly predictable physical characteristics and behaviours, so you won't need to spend a long time searching for perfect combination.

The first thing to do is to decide on a breed. Even if you have a good idea of the breed you're interested in, taking a little time to do some research can help ensure that you've made the right choice.

If you choose a purebred puppy, you'll need to learn a lot about how to choose a reputable breeder. Good breeders may mean a bit of a wait for available puppies, but you should end up with a happy, healthy, puppy in the end.



Choosing A Breed

Once you've got a good idea of the breeds you're interested in, talk to several owners of the breeds you'd

like to buy. Breeds vary enormously in personality, and it's crucial to consider if a breed's personality matches you and your family's needs.

Different breeds were developed for different functions, and this can greatly influence their behaviours. For example, Border Collies were bred to be herding dogs, and are happiest when kept busy with walks, playing Frisbee, or herding sheep. They need something to do every day of the week, and every week of the year. These dogs even need mental stimulation like games of hide-and-seek, or hiding favourite toys under rugs or in other rooms. Border Collies can be wonderful pets for an active person, but a huge bother and burden for someone who doesn't like to take walks every day.

You can even spend some time in online groups that are focused on the breed. Google, Yahoo, AOL, and MSN all offer dog-related email lists. Often, members in the lists can be incredibly supportive and helpful. Of course, any information that you get over the internet should never be a replacement for professional advice from breeders, veterinarians, or kennel clubs.

You can find email lists at:

- Google: <http://groups.google.com>
- Yahoo! Groups: <http://groups.yahoo.com>
- AOL Groups: <http://groups.aol.com>
- MSN Groups: <http://groups.msn.com>

Getting To Know The Breed

Find out which clubs represent your breed, and contact them to find out breed standards. In the USA, most breeds are represented in the AKC breed list (www.akc.org), while rarer breeds represented by the Rare Breed Network (www.rarebreed.com) are not part of the AKC.

In Canada, the Canadian Kennel Club represents most breeds. Visit the CKC's website for more information at: www.ckc.ca/en/.

Know what is standard for the breed. This is important to avoid dogs that are clearly incorrectly identified as a specific breed, and avoid dogs that are the product of dangerous, excessive, inbreeding (Red Rottweilers, for example, are a well known result of an inbred relationship, and do not conform to the breed standard).

Talk to rescue organizations for the breed, and try to determine why dogs of the breed are given up. In the US, the National Breed Club Rescue Network maintains an extensive list of rescue organizations for specific breeds (www.adognet.com/4d.html).

Try to meet people who own your breed. They can give you a realistic picture of life with your breed of dog!

Dog shows can be a good resource for finding out information on a specific breed. A great way to get a feel for dog shows is by watching the Westminster Kennel Club show, which is televised from New York's Madison Square Garden every February. The show gives a good overview of AKC breeds.

Considering A Rare Breed

Rare breeds can be wonderful for a few reasons; including the pride of knowing you own something unique, and the conversations that get started as other people try to figure out what kind of dog you own. Unfortunately, there are a few pitfalls that you should be aware of if you're considering a rare breed.

With most rare breeds, you may run into difficulty finding a reputable breeder close to you, simply because there will be so few breeders of the breed. In addition, if you do happen to find a good breeder with an available litter,

you may have problems getting the right dog for you. This may occur, for example, if all the puppies in the litter seem to be highly dominant or aggressive, and you're searching for a mild-mannered, quiet puppy.

Because rare breeds, by definition, are unusual, you may have trouble finding professional resources to help you with the breed. This may start with difficulty in finding a local breeder, but soon include difficulty finding a veterinarian or dog trainer with experience in the breed. You may also have trouble finding individuals with the same breed of dog for informal support.

Depending on the breed, you can also face some additional challenges, including:

- strong instinctive desires such as a herding instinct, or the desire to roam
- conflicts with other pets. The New Guinea Singing Dog, for example, rarely tolerates living with another adult dog of the same sex. (The New Guinea Singing Dog was discovered in New Guinea in the 1950s, and gets its name from the whale-like singing at morning and in the evening).
- increased grooming and maintenance. For example, the American Eskimo, a rare breed with a luxurious, long, white coat, is prone to heavy shedding.
- special nutritional needs
- an increased need for exercise. This is especially true of rare breeds like the Australian Kelpie, which is an active herding dog that needs constant exercise if it's not working herding sheep.
- additional costs. A dog like the Canaan dog may become bored if not exercised extensively, leading to the dog tearing up your furniture.
- increased training requirements. The Malaysian Telomian is an excellent example, as it is considered to be a close relative of the Australian Dingo. It was first discovered as a wild dog in Malaysia in the

1960s, and, given that it is less domesticated than the average pet dog, still has a wild streak that is difficult to train.

- Some of the behavioral challenges for some rare breeds may conflict directly with the pup's ability to be a good family pet. For example, a rare breed dog with a strong instinct to hunt or herd may be at an increased risk of nipping or biting someone.

Rare breeds attract disreputable breeders

Rare breeds attract breeders who try to exploit the breed for profit. These breeders recognize a money-making opportunity because there are few of the dogs, and many people who want the breed. This creates a situation where profiteers breed dogs only for profit, caring little for the dog's health or welfare. Disreputable breeders of rare breeds may have trouble finding a good breeding stock, and therefore breed dogs with genetic disorders or other health concerns. They may care little about the homes where the puppies are finally placed. If you're considering a rare breed, you'll have to be extra careful to find a good breeder.

None of this means that you shouldn't get a rare breed, however. It simply means that you may need to spend a little extra time researching and reconsidering if the breed is right for you.

Myths About Purebred Registration

Understanding purebred registration puts you heads and shoulders above other puppy buyers. Perhaps most importantly, understanding purebred registration may save you from buying a puppy solely based on the fact that it's a purebred.

One of the most misunderstood areas that you'll encounter when looking for a specific breed is the concept of purebred registration.

Purebred papers do guarantee you some things, namely that a puppy's:

- parents are members of a recognized breed
- ancestry is of the same breed over many generations

However, many people trying to sell you a puppy will tell you that a puppy with purebred papers is of better quality than a puppy without papers. This simply isn't the case.

Purebred registration *does not* mean that a puppy is:

- of breeding quality
- healthier than a non-registered puppy
- more intelligent than a non-registered puppy
- an example of an excellent temperament

The American Kennel Club (AKC) allows any breeder in good standing to register their dogs as long as the dog's ancestors were previously registered with the AKC. The AKC also opposes large scale breeding of dogs for profit, and promotes responsible ownership, and supports enforcement of humane conditions for animals. While that sounds wonderful, the AKC simply doesn't have enough staff to do routine inspections to ensure that all breeders meet these goals. For example, the AKC performed about 4,800 inspections in 2003, but registered 423,761 litters. Given that ratio, there's likely a high probability that some of the breeders who registered purebreds with the AKC simply don't meet the AKC's high standards of animal welfare.

All in all, the purebred registration process is a helpful tool to determine if your puppy is a true example of the breed. You just need to go a lot further than simply

trusting registration papers to ensure that you get a happy, healthy, puppy.

You're likely going to come across breeders with registered purebred puppies that simply aren't the kind of people that you'd want to buy a puppy from. The puppies may be bred to parents with poor temperaments or genetic diseases, even with purebred registration. Perhaps even more disturbingly, it's possible that a breeder who breeds registered purebred puppies may be operating a puppy mill.

As a result, you need to be well armed with information and questions to spot puppy mills and unethical breeders. Getting a happy, healthy, puppy will likely require a bit of investigation and leg work on your end.

A Word About Champions

If a breeder claims their puppies have champion lines, this really only means that there was a champion somewhere in the puppies' family. The champion could have been your puppy's aunt, great-great-great-great-great grandfather, first cousin, or an even more distant relative. So, claiming a champion line really says nothing about the quality of the puppies. However, if the ad says champion sired or champion parents, this means that one or both of the puppies' parents were champions. Just make sure that you verify any claims.

The bottom line about champions

Champion parents do not necessarily guarantee champion quality offspring!

Also, beware if the breeder claims the puppy's parents (your puppy's grandparents) were champion sired or had champion parents. Your puppy's mom or dad may have been sold as a pet, rather than a breeding dog, to an

unscrupulous breeder. After all, anyone can buy a puppy from a champion line, and use the line to make money. As always, verify any claims.

Decide Where You Want To Buy Your Purebred

Purebreds can be found in shelters, rescues, pet stores, or through friends or family, pet stores, and breeders. Carefully researching where you want to buy your purebred is an important step in finding a happy, healthy, dog.



Rescue organization or shelter

A rescue organization or shelter can be a great place to get your purebred. There are many high quality \$400 to \$1,000 purebred dogs, and rare breeds, that end up in a shelter. Unfortunately, many dogs in shelters and rescues don't have all of the registration and pedigree information

available. At the same time, many genetic problems can already be seen in adult purebred dogs at shelters, while these can't be seen in purebred puppies.

Shelters house many types of dogs, but if you're patient, may have the breed and age that you want. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) says that about 25% to 30% of shelter's dogs are purebreds.

Literally hundreds of rescue organizations for purebreds exist. Many of them are specialize in a specific breed, but others deal with all types of purebreds.

The American Kennel Club keeps a list of breed-specific rescues at www.akc.org/breeds/rescue.cfm.

In the United Kingdom, The Kennel Club publishes a directory of the breed rescue centres (www.thekennelclub.org.uk).

Pet store

Most breed clubs do not support the sale of their breed to a pet store, or for an auction or raffle. A reputable, caring, breeder wants to know that their puppies will go to good homes. Generally, only a breeder that cares more about money than the welfare of their dogs will sell puppies through a pet store. Please read [*Ten reasons not to buy from a pet store, page 104*](#).

Locally

It's extremely rare to find a good quality breeder through local newspaper ads, or through bulletin boards. However, friends or personal contacts can be a great way to find a reputable breeder. Be sure to read [*Buy From A Reputable Breeder, page 158*](#) before choosing a puppy this way.

Occasionally, you may find a purebred adult dog to give away through friends, local classifieds, or through a bulletin board. This can be a fantastic way to get a great dog, but make sure that you find out why the dog is being given away, and ask a ton of questions. The best way to approach getting a dog this way is as if you were getting the dog through a rescue or shelter, although you'll likely have the advantage of being able to see the dog's current environment.

Breeder

"Whoever said you can't buy happiness forgot little puppies."
Gene Hill



A breeder can be a fantastic choice when buying a purebred puppy. Buying a happy, healthy, puppy from a reputable and knowledgeable breeder can be a wonderful experience. A good breeder will help to ensure that your purebred puppy is a great fit for your family, and gives you many years of companionship.

Be warned: An unscrupulous, uncaring, breeder can turn getting a puppy into a heartbreaking and expensive process. An unscrupulous breeder can cost you much, much, more than a few hundred dollars that the puppy cost. In the end, getting an unhealthy, badly bred puppy can cost you a ton of heartache and an enormous amount of money.

Once you've brought home a puppy, it becomes part of the family. Puppies are cute, cuddly, and worm their way into our hearts in no time at all. If you buy your puppy from an unscrupulous breeder, you may find that your puppy isn't that healthy (worms, malnutrition, or no vaccinations, for example). You may find that your puppy isn't well socialized, and is afraid of you, loud noises, the cat, and so on. Even worse, imagine if your beloved puppy grows to be an unhealthy dog. Veterinarian bills could easily pile up. A dog from a disreputable breeder may have genetic health issues that could easily have been avoided by careful breeding. What if you have to put your much-loved dog to sleep because of these health issues? Imagine how you, and even worse, how your children, if you have them, would feel.

Unfortunately, people end up with puppies from bad breeders all the time. There's a real industry out there that preys on people's ignorance. Unscrupulous breeders really don't care about any problems you may have with their puppies. All they care about is getting your cash in their pocket, right now.

If you're considering buying a puppy from a breeder, you absolutely must learn:

- why you should buy from a reputable breeder
- how to spot bad breeders
- what questions to ask a breeder
- the warning signs when visiting a breeder

Buy From A Reputable Breeder

A good breeder is absolutely essentially in ensuring you get a happy, healthy, puppy. Reputable breeders want nothing more than to place a healthy puppy with a family that will love him and care for him for the rest of his life.

Tip!

Print out the ways to spot a good breeder in the following pages and take it with you as you visit different breeders.

Why buy from a reputable breeder?

1. A good breeder will be concerned about your puppy's health and happiness long after you've brought the puppy home. Responsible breeders will become good friends to you and your puppy. You can count on their support, and they often even provide tips on training and taking care of your new pup. Most good breeders sell puppies with spay or neuter contracts, which shows that they care both for the future of the breed (they don't want lower quality dogs to reduce the quality of the breed) and they're concerned about unwanted puppies down the line.
2. You will be helping to save a female dog from being condemned to a life as a breeding machine in a puppy mill. As an added bonus you'll be, in a small way, helping to put puppy mills out of business by refusing to put money in their pockets.

3. You'll be giving your financial support to people who usually truly love dogs, and care deeply for the breed.
4. A good breeder will have tested your puppy's bloodline for disease, helping you to get a healthier puppy.

Silver's story — a puppy from a reputable breeder

One of my first memories is of cuddling with my doggy mom and brothers and sisters, and looking up at my first human mom. My human mom picked me up, told me I was a sweet little puppy, tickled my tummy, and gave me warm kisses. She told me that she'd just talked to a wonderful family on the phone who would give me a good home. She said they'd agreed to spay me when I was older, and asked lots of good questions about how I was raised. I didn't really understand, especially the spay part, but I remember liking all the cuddles and play time.

A couple of days later, the family that wanted to buy me came to visit. They hugged and cuddled me, and asked my first human mom a lot of questions about me and my doggy mom and dad. I liked their little boy a lot — he was a lot of fun to play with, and I missed him when he left. A couple of days later a person that she called "the vet" came to visit. He was really nice too, but the needle vaccine things stung a bit. He told me they would keep me from getting sick.

Then my forever family came to pick me up. That was really exciting! I got my first ride in a car, and they gave me so many hugs and cuddles on the way home that I thought I'd never be so happy. When I got to my new home I was so tired that I fell right asleep in my very own doggie bed.

That was five years ago! My forever family's little boy is now twelve, and he and I play in the backyard all the time, and play Frisbee in the park. I see the vet every year for more needle vaccinations (yuck), and he tells me that I'm a happy, healthy, girl. Sometimes my first mommy even comes by to visit. She tells me that I'll always have a place to live with her, but I'd never leave my forever family!

Finding a reputable breeder

It's all well and good to say that you should buy a puppy from a reputable breeder, but finding a good breeder can be difficult. After all, many of the best breeders never advertise, sell only to family and friends, and sell a limited number of puppies.

Most ethical breeders do not breed frequently. They'll only breed when they've found male and female dogs that are able to produce happy, healthy, good-natured puppies that are a good example of the breed. A good breeder will also only breed if they're positive that they can find responsible, loving homes for the puppies.

But don't despair, there are ways to find a terrific, reputable breeder if you're willing to invest in a bit of time and leg work. Remember, your dog will live with you for at least 12 to 15 years, so you'll probably want to spend as much time selecting a breeder as you would a babysitter or a family doctor. You'll want a breeder that is knowledgeable, thorough, experienced, has integrity, and that, ultimately, has the best interests of you and the dog at heart.

It's important to know that a person who sells dogs from his or her own premises, directly to the public, is exempt from the Animal Welfare Act in the United States. Retail pet stores that sell animals directly to the public (which currently, by definition, includes individuals who sell directly to the public) are exempt from the Animal Welfare Act's handling and minimum humane care requirements.

What does this mean to you? Dogs are not protected by the Animal Welfare Act if an unscrupulous breeder sells a dog directly to you! It's crucially important that you know how to find and identify a reputable breeder, and what important warning signs to watch for when visiting a breeder.

Search the internet. This is a great place to search for a breeder of specific dogs near you. Just be aware that you'll need to do a lot more due diligence, as you have no way of telling if the breeders mentioned on the internet are reputable. This is where all of the tools we provide to determine if a breeder is reputable come in handy!

A quick Google search should bring up breeders in your area that specialize in a specific breed. Be careful, however, as what the breeder chooses to put on his website may be different than reality. You'll need to exercise a fair bit of caution, and do your research to make sure the breeder's reputable.

Get the word out!

- ask your veterinarian
- ask your friends, family, and co-workers

Join an internet group of fanciers of the breed. You can find some of these at:

- Google: <http://groups.google.com>
- Yahoo! Groups: <http://groups.yahoo.com>
- AOL Groups: <http://groups.aol.com>
- MSN Groups: <http://groups.msn.com>

Get contacts for specific breeders through a reputable registration organization

- UK — The Kennel Club in the UK has an online puppy sales registration tool at: www.the-kennel-club.org.uk/asp/PSAR/
- US — The American Kennel Club has a list of breeder referral contacts at breed clubs at www.akc.org/breederinfo/breeder_search.cfm
- Canada — The Canadian Kennel Club has a list of breed clubs that can help refer you to specific breeders at: www.ckc.ca/en/Default.aspx?tabid=100

- Australia — The Australian National Kennel Council's Member Bodies (based in individual States or Territories) maintain lists of breeders. A list of the Australian National Kennel Council's Member Bodies is available at: www.ankc.aust.com/contact.html
- New Zealand—The New Zealand Kennel Club (NZKC) maintains an online list of breeders at www.nzkc.org.nz/

Visit breed clubs

- Breed clubs are most often limited to a single breed, and are called *specialty clubs*. Specialty clubs can refer you to breeders for specific breeds.

Look in newspapers and magazines

- Magazines like Dog Fancy, Dog World, Dog USA, the AKC Gazette, and Puppies USA carry ads for breeders. The great majority of these breeders are reputable, but, as always, it's up to you to do your research.
- Your local newspaper may carry ads for breeders. Newspapers generally don't screen these ads, so you'll have to be careful to ensure the breeders are reputable.

The sample ad from a reputable breeder that follows is a great example of what to look for in a newspaper ad. The puppies are socialized, vet checked, and the local breeder is searching for good homes, and wants a contract.

Sample ad from a reputable breeder

American Cocker Spaniel pups. Registered, shots, dewormed, vet check, championship lines, good temperament, health and genetic guarantee, home raised with children, parents can be seen. Ready to go in three weeks to approved homes, on contract. Serious inquiries only. Contact Megan. Start \$500. Local phone number.

The sample ad from a disreputable backyard breeder that follows is a great example of what to avoid in a newspaper ad. The puppies are not socialized or checked by a veterinarian, and are only five weeks old (far too young to leave their mother). On top of that, the breeder is urgently trying to sell the puppies using scare tactics like the humane society. A good breeder will not encourage people to buy puppies just as a Christmas present.

**Sample ad from a disreputable backyard breeder**

Adorable little Cocker Spaniel puppies! Purebred, unregistered. Five weeks old, will deliver to your city this weekend, just in time for Christmas! Must sell or destined for humane society. \$200, price negotiable. Out of area phone number.

Go to a dog show

Talk to exhibitors! Once they're finished showing their dogs, exhibitors are generally thrilled to chat with you

about the breed, and can often recommend good breeders (they may even breed dogs themselves).

About dog shows

Dog shows are a place where dog enthusiasts gather, and dogs are judged by a subjective view of their physical appearance and behavior. Dog shows can include all breeds, or can be specialized to a single breed. All-breed dog shows are a fantastic place to see several breeds in one place if you're considering more than one breed of dog. Dog shows are also a great place to meet breeders and other people who are knowledgeable about specific breeds.

The dogs at dog shows, however, are specialized, and may not represent most dogs in the breed. Show dogs are bred specifically for winning the show. Because of this, show dogs may represent the most extreme physical characteristics (for example, exceptionally pointy ears or a long tail), but may not represent what is best about the breed's temperament. This means that show dog may look quite a bit different than a good quality pet dog, of the same breed, from a good quality breeder. The difference is that a good breeder looking at placing dogs as a house pet will probably breed for temperament and health, while a show dog breeder will likely breed with a higher emphasis on looks.

The bottom line about dog shows

In the end, the fact that a puppy's ancestors participated (and even won) many dog shows does not guarantee that the puppy's lineage represents the best of the breed in terms of health and temperament. Scientific testing for health and genetic diseases, and careful breeding and screening for temperament are much more important considerations than a lineage of show champions.

Where do I find dog shows or field events?

You can find information at:

- your veterinarian
- internet search engines like Google, Yahoo, or MSN
- dog breeders
- industry publications like the AKC Gazette, available through www.akc.org
- kennel clubs

United States — Go to the American Kennel Club's web site at www.akc.org/events to find a list of your local events.

Canada — The Canadian Kennel Club has a searchable index of events like agility trials and dog shows (also known as conformation events) at: www.ckc.ca/en/Default.aspx?tabid=87

UK — The Kennel Club in the UK has a list of activities and competitive events at: www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/index.html

Australia — The Australian National Kennel Council's Member Bodies (based in individual States or Territories) maintain information on shows and events. A list of the Australian National Kennel Council's Member Bodies is available at: <http://www.ankc.aust.com/contact.html>

New Zealand — The New Zealand Kennel Club (NZKC) maintains a list of activities and events at: www.nzkc.org.nz

Checklist for spotting a reputable breeder

A reputable breeder will:

- be happy to answer all your questions. They'll never be evasive, and never make excuses.

- let you see the puppy's mother at their kennel. This will let you do two things: one, inspect the mother's health, size, and personality, and two, make sure that the breeding facility is not a puppy mill. If possible, ask to see the father, although you may have to go to another kennel.
- tell you about genetic diseases common to the breed
- have ensured that both the puppy's mother and father have been tested for genetic diseases common to the breed
- show you the puppy's detailed lineage. This includes the registration (for example, American Kennel Club papers), any pedigree information about the parents, including champions in the line, and information about any genetic and health testing done on dogs in the pedigree.
- provide health certificates, veterinarian visits, and records of any immunizations
- be a member of a registered association, such as the American or Canadian Kennel Club (assuming, of course, that the breed the breeder deals with is registered. Mixed breeds or rare breeds may not be registered with the AKC).
- give you a signed bill of sale saying the puppy is a purebred
- give you a written guarantee
- probably place restrictions on breeding the puppy
- confirm the parents, and puppy, are registered purebreds
- ask you questions to determine if you'll give the puppy a responsible, caring home
- probably give you a contract to sign that says you will spay or neuter the puppy. They may even ask you to attend a basic dog obedience course or puppy kindergarten. The contract should also say that they'll be willing to take the puppy back if it can no longer be kept for any reason, or at any age.

- make sure that you aren't giving the puppy to someone else as a surprise gift
- be happy to tell you steps they have taken as a breeder to improve the breed
- give you professional references from veterinarians, and clubs or organizations with which they are affiliated
- even pick the puppy for you, in some cases! This can be difficult for some owners, but just remember that the breeder has more experience with the dogs, and is obviously concerned for the puppy's welfare.



- have tested the puppies (or parents) for temperament. This isn't a deal breaker, but is still a good sign. Many good breeders (and even rescues) screen puppies to see if they're a good match for prospective owners. If you're a relaxed, laid back person, you may have trouble with a dominant, aggressive puppy that's difficult to train. Similarly, if you're couch potato, you could have trouble with a

highly energetic dog that's constantly begging for exercise and attention.

- be able to tell you the good and bad points of the puppy's mother and father
- follow up on your puppy's health and well being, even after it is sold to you
- socialize the puppies well, by introducing them to different people and children, and handling them regularly
- be able to give you informative material on dog health and obedience, such as information on vaccinations, heartworm treatment, grooming, nutrition, and the names of some good dog trainers
- tell you there is a waiting period for puppies. This is good, as it can mean the breeder wants to make sure that you aren't making an impulsive decision.
- breed with temperament and health in mind, before breeding for physical characteristics like color. This may not be the case if the breeder is breeding dogs for show.
- register the puppy with a major, recognized registry. Some lesser-known registries exist simply to provide papers to puppy mills and unethical breeders that have lost their registration privileges at the major registries. Reputable registries include the:
 - Canadian Kennel Club
 - American Kennel Club
 - Kennel Club in the UK
 - Australian National Kennel Council
 - New Zealand Kennel Club

Canadians, take note! Make sure that the breeder means the Canadian Kennel Club when they mention the CKC. Other unofficial registries use the same initials, and some unscrupulous breeders will tell you the dogs

are registered with the CKC, but fail to mention that they mean an organization other than the Canadian Kennel Club.

Above all, you should get the feeling that the breeder really cares for the dogs. The breeder should be truly concerned that you will give the puppy a good home, and that the dogs are healthy and happy. If you feel, in any way, that this isn't the case, it's a big warning sign that the breeder may not be the best choice for you.

"A breeder should not be judged by how many ribbons, but what they are doing to improve the breed as a whole — in health, temperament, natural instinct and confirmation".

"Just because a breeder shows in confirmation does not mean they are a good breeder — it simply means they show their dogs under judges to get another knowledgeable person's perspective on how their dog fits the breed standard. It does not assure temperament or health."

Michelle McKim, Willowynd Collies, professional Collie breeder with over 10 years experience in confirmation showings and breeding

What a good breeder should ask you

Reputable breeders will be just as interested in asking you questions as you are in asking the breeder questions. A good breeder wants to find the best home possible for the puppies. After all, the breeder has probably spent a lot of money, time, and work to breed a litter of happy, healthy, puppies. A good breeder wants to see her much-loved puppies go to good, responsible, caring homes.

A good breeder may ask if you:

- live alone, if you have children, if there will be another adult in the home, and if everyone is comfortable with the idea of having a new pet
- where you live (apartment, house, or acreage, and so on)
- if you rent. If you rent, the breeder may require a note from your landlord saying that you are allowed to have pets.
- if your home is secure (some breeders may want you to have a fence of a specific height for larger breeds)
- if you will plan to keep the dog inside with you and the rest of the family most of the time
- how often you plan to walk or exercise the dog
- plan on leaving the dog alone during the day
- plan to tie the dog in the back yard. Most breeders do not like tie-outs for long periods of time as they pose a safety risk and take an emotional toll on the dog.
- will spay or neuter the dog
- have had dogs before, and what happened to them
- have other pets
- have experience or know much about the breed
- intend to breed or show the dog
- have experience training a dog, or if you are willing to take the dog to obedience classes
- have personal references, or a veterinary reference to ensure past pets were spayed or neutered and well cared for

A really responsible breeder may even give you the feeling that you're being interviewed, and you probably are! After all, a good breeder wants to make absolutely certain her beloved puppies are given to good homes. It's a good sign if the breeder asks you a lot of questions — it means that she is truly interested in the puppies' welfare.

Many breeders may ask you to sign a contract that may require you have the dog checked regularly by a veterinarian, keep current on vaccinations and heartworm preventatives, and spay or neuter your dog. Some breeders feel so strongly about spaying and neutering that they even require, in writing, that you be charged a fee if your dog has puppies.

Warning signs when visiting a breeder

Think twice if the breeder:

- is evasive when answering your questions
- claims that the dog's real owners are out of town
- always seems to have puppies for sale — this indicates that he may get his puppies from a large volume breeding facility or puppy mill, or may simply be breeding large numbers of puppies himself for profit
- will not let you see the kennels. Many breeders are concerned about visitors passing diseases to the dogs, so don't be surprised if you're not allowed behind the fence. You should, however, be able to see that the kennels are clean and that the dogs are well cared for. The breeder may even ask you to wash your hands before touching the dogs to keep you from spreading diseases to the dogs.
- offers to sell you the puppy before interviewing you. Some wonderful breeders sell through word of mouth or through their websites, and you may never meet them in person, but they should make every effort to ensure that you'll give their puppies a good home.
- will not let you see the puppy's mother
- does not seem to know much about the breed
- pressures you to buy the puppy
- does not have the pedigrees available, or says that they're in another location

-
- says that health records will be available with the registration certificate (which, of course, are not available)
 - says that health records aren't available
 - will give you a puppy that is under eight weeks of age
 - says that there are no health problems associated with the breed
 - has not let a veterinarian look at the puppies
 - kept the kennel in a dirty, or neglected state
 - has bred a female dog less than two years of age. In most cases, female dogs need at least two years to have matured enough physically and mentally to have puppies and be a great mom.
 - the mother has had more than three or four full litters. Having offspring is hard on the body (as any mother, of any species, can tell you). More than three or four litters can compromise the health of the mother. The exception to this is if the mother has had small litters (usually four pups for a larger dog like a Collie) — these small litters are not as hard on the mother, so she can be bred more often.
 - is not able to tell you all of the dogs' names
 - asks you for a full deposit or full payment up front, without a legal bill of sale
 - says that a written guarantee will be mailed to you at a later date
 - will not write a guarantee against genetic defects common in the breed that may crop up later in life.
 - offers to sell you the puppy at a lower price without papers
 - is not a member of a recognized dog registration organization like the Canadian Kennel Club or American Kennel Club
 - says that the mother produces more than one litter a year

-
- has dogs, including the puppy's mother, that seem afraid of people
 - claims the dogs are extra large or extra small. This may mean the dogs are outside of the breed standard, and thus be of lower quality.
 - breeds designer cross breeds like Labradoodles or Malti-Poos. Professional breeder Michelle McKim Willowynd Collies notes that designer breeds "can have the genetic issues of both breeds of parents - not to mention the puppies will all look different as adults and size is impossible to determine."
 - tells you inconsistent things. Be careful here; if the breeder's story changes with each telling, she may be lying.
 - keeps their dogs in cages outside, or keeps adult dogs in crates most of the time
 - cannot provide a pedigree, and cannot give you information about the health of dogs on the pedigree and the lines they are from
 - sells more than two breeds, and does not generally keep at least one puppy out of each litter
 - has fed the puppies and mother a cheap, generic brand of dog food. A reputable breeder will feed her dogs a good quality food.

Be wary of breeders who brag they're USDA inspected

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) enforces the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which provides only the bare minimum of protection for animals.

USDA inspections require minimum care standards for food, shelter, and water. They *do not* provide any standards for freedom from confining cages, socialization, or love.

Many puppy mills and poor breeders (or pet store staff) who say their animals are USDA-licensed and inspected actually may be in violation of the Animal Welfare Act.

Top Five Questions To Ask A Breeder

Here's a short list of some of the most important questions you should ask any breeder.

Can I see the puppy's parents?

Never buy a puppy without being able to see one or both of the parents. This is to screen out puppies from puppy mills, where the parents often live in horrible, unsanitary conditions. The parents are often caged almost all their lives, given cheap food, and simply kept for breeding. Puppies from puppy mills are almost always taken from their mother and brothers and sisters way too early, leading to socialization problems with people and other animals. These dogs can be frightened and anti-social.

Common excuses for not letting you see a puppy's parents are:

The mother is ill, at a friend's house, or that they're selling the puppy for someone else.

If you hear these excuses — **beware!** The breeders may just be trying to keep you from seeing the parents.

Can I see the pedigree?

Some unethical breeders will even fake pedigree certificates. Stories abound of puppy buyers getting a certificate for a specific breed, that when grown, is clearly a different breed.

Can I see the health information for the parents and the puppy?

Health testing should be specific to the breed, and cover disorders that are normally seen in dogs of the same breed. The puppies may not be old enough for some tests, so the parents should be screened for those. The health information the breeder supplies should reflect common health issues in the breed, for example, hip dysplasia is commonly tested for in many large breeds of dogs.

Can you tell me about the breed, and about genetic diseases that are common to the breed?

Even if you know all about the breed, and understand the genetic problems associated with the breed, this question can be valuable. You should reconsider buying a puppy from a breeder that cannot, or will not, answer this question.

Can I see the kennels?

Never buy a puppy if the breeder refuses to let you view the kennels. A good breeder will be happy to let you see the puppies' environment in a supervised visit. Even if you don't actually plan to visit (if you live a long way away, for example), the breeder's answer to this should be yes.

"The breeder should make themselves available for the life of the puppy, being on hand to provide answers to questions and concerns you may have in the future. A good breeder views a relationship with a buyer as a life-long commitment, not something that ends as soon as they have the money in their hand and the puppy is out the door."

Michelle McKim of Willowynd Collies, professional Collie breeder with over 10 years experience in confirmation showings and breeding.

Buying on a co-ownership

The breeder usually wants to sell the puppy on a co-ownership when the breeder is selling you part of the breeding stock. This generally gives the breeder rights to breed your puppy in the future. You may want to reconsider this sort of arrangement, unless you are seriously considering breeding your dog. At a basic minimum, you need to:

- make absolutely sure that you like and are comfortable talking to the breeder
- outline who pays for what costs, such as veterinarian bills
- understand your responsibilities, and those of the breeder
- put the co-ownership agreement in writing

How Much You Should Pay

One of the hardest things you'll have to figure out is a fair price a purebred puppy of your breed. Purebred puppies sold as pets can commonly cost \$400 or more, making your puppy a fairly expensive purchase. Purebred puppies sold for breeding, show, or working purposes can easily reach \$1,500 and more.

These tips can keep you from paying too much for your puppy:

- Know how much purebreds of the breed usually sell for. Talk to a few breeders and ask them the prices they've charged for their last litters. Ask owners how much they paid for their purebred. Talk to people at dog shows. Contact your local breed club.
- Be careful of a bargain that seems too good to be true. You know what they say — something that's too good to be true probably is (too good to be true, that is). Many unethical backyard breeders and pet stores charge bargain prices for their AKC registered pups, but they don't do adequate genetic testing, or give the puppies the excellent health care and socialization that they need. A bargain puppy may end up costing you more time and hassle in the long run, due to genetic issues that pop up (which could have been prevented by knowledgeable, careful breeding), other health issues, and extra training required for poorly socialized puppies.
- Prices can vary greatly. Prices fluctuate depending on demand, the quality of the mother and father (including things such as if there are champions in the line), the breeder's financial circumstances, the time of year (prices tend to go up before Christmas), the specific area, the size of the litter, if the puppy has show or breeding potential, if the puppy is to be sold as a family pet, and even if the puppy is the first or last of the litter to be sold (breeders sometimes

reduce prices if their puppies seem to be slow to sell).

Getting a better deal



Paying less for a lower quality puppy may not be a better deal in the long run. A lower quality puppy may have more genetic or health-related issues, or may not have the excellent temperament of a more expensive puppy. That said, these tips can help you save some cash on happy, healthy, puppies from excellent, reputable breeders.

- Don't buy before Christmas or other major holidays. Prices for purebred tend to increase around major holidays and Christmas, since demand for puppies increases around these times.
- Buy one of the last puppies in the litter. The last puppy in the litter is often there simply by luck, and may be a wonderful puppy. However, breeders may charge less for the last puppies because people

believe, often incorrectly, that the last puppies are inferior to the littermates that sold earlier. Be careful, as this strategy can sometimes backfire — if the puppies sell quickly, the breeder may charge more for the remaining puppies.

- Don't insist on buying from the most famous breeder of show dogs. A show quality puppy may cost you a lot more money than a puppy that will never compete. Many wonderful, reputable breeders show on a limited basis (or not at all), and breed for temperament and health before show quality.

Buying From Afar

You may find that the breeder and puppies that you want are in the next state, or even a different country. This occurs most often with rare breeds, but can even happen if you want to deal with a specific breeder with a great reputation. It can take a fair bit of work to get a puppy that's out of your local area, especially if you deal with a breeder who's out of the country.

You'll probably end up waiting for a litter of puppies when dealing with a breeder out of your local area. Be sure to ask the breeder for photos or videos of the puppies as they grow. This can help ease the pain of waiting!

Making contact

The best way to make the first contact with a breeder is by mail or phone call. Letters are usually much too slow, and take too much time for a response.

Expect a lot of questions from the breeder at this stage. She'll want to ensure that she's talking to someone who'll

give her precious puppies a good home. You'll probably have a lot of questions as well, so be patient if this process takes a while!

Ask the breeder to send you as much information as possible, including information about the breed, caring for a new puppy, and photos and information about the puppy's mother and father.

Transportation

The best way to transport your puppy home is in person, if possible. If you can arrange it, drive to the breeder's location to pick up the puppy.

If the breeder is too far away to drive, the next best thing is to fly to the breeder. Many airlines will let you take the puppy in the cabin with you, if it is properly secured in a soft carrier.

Be sure to check with your individual airline's rules about transporting live animals. Some airlines have specific restrictions during holidays, and still others will only let animals in the baggage compartment.

If you have to fly your puppy home by herself, ask that her crate be labelled as *priority*. This should help ensure that your puppy is the first loaded on or off the plane.



A reputable breeder should be extremely reluctant to ship a small puppy, by herself, in a plane's cargo hold. Leaving the security of her mom and littermates is bound to be stressful enough, and adding a long, lonely flight will be extremely difficult for a small puppy.

Only ship a puppy by herself if you absolutely need to, and be wary of a breeder that doesn't seem to have any qualms about shipping a puppy alone.

If your puppy is flying by herself, be sure to book a direct flight! This will help shorten the flight for her, and there's much less chance of her crate being misdirected.

Out of country

If you get a puppy from out of the country, you'll have to deal with some additional considerations. Many countries have periods of quarantine on animals imported into the country (meaning that your new puppy may end up in a kennel in quarantine for a few weeks!). Other countries require that specific veterinarian checks be performed and specific vaccinations be given before a puppy can be brought into the country.

Breeding Your Purebred

Do you want to breed your purebred?

After paying a lot of money for a purebred, many people feel that they should breed their dog to recoup the costs. Others simply want a little copies of their much-beloved dog. Still others become interested in the breed, and want to play a part in improving or maintaining the breed.

If you want to breed your dog because you would like your kids to experience the miracle of birth or you would like a copy of your current dog, **please think again!** There are thousands of unwanted dogs at shelters — please don't contribute to the problem.

Whatever your reason for considering breeding your purebred, breeding is serious business, both ethically and financially. This means that you shouldn't make the decision to breed your purebred lightly.

Even if you want to breed your dog just once, just for fun, you'll have a lot to consider. Breeding puppies can be quite expensive and risky.

Many breeders don't even break even on their puppies. The high costs of genetic and health testing, food, veterinarian care, and other fees are simply too much.

Things to think about before breeding:

- Will you be able to get good homes for the puppies?
- Will you offer a guarantee for the puppies? What will you do if one of the homes decides to return a dog a few months after buying it? You may be stuck with a returned puppy.
- Do you have the time to breed responsibly? You'll need to spend time socializing the puppies, taking care of their medical needs, dealing with prospective buyers, learning about the breed, building a reputation as a breeder registered with the AKC, and much, much, more, including potentially showing your dogs.
- Do you have the financial resources to breed responsibly? You'll need to pay for food, shelter, veterinarian care, stud fees, advertising, travel expenses or shipping for the stud or sire, training, AKC fees and health testing fees, and a host of other, and sometimes unexpected, expenses.

Only become a breeder if you have an almost unlimited supply of patience, money, time, and space. Breeding is a time-consuming business that requires a deep love of the dogs!

One of the most challenging parts of becoming a serious breeder is the enormous amount of information that you'll need to know. To be a reputable, high-quality breeder, you'll need to:

- know breed standards
- become a member of your local breed club
- learn about pedigrees and registration
- become a member of your country's kennel club
- learn the basic biology of breeding and birth
- determine why you are breeding, for example, to improve temperament or coat
- understand dog care basics, including vaccination schedules
- learn to groom the dogs
- become involved in shows
- learn about the breeds specific health issues
- understand genetic and health testing

Breeding your Purebred — Females are Best

If you're planning to breed your purebred, you may be better off to get a female. A female purebred usually has her pick of suitors, while even a superb male can have trouble finding a suitable quality female, since there's so much competition.

Showing Your Purebred

Do you want to show your purebred?

These days, dog showing is a competitive and often strenuous business. Long gone are the days when you could just bring in a really good-looking dog to the ring to win a few ribbons. Today, you'll have to become an instant expert in grooming, handling, behavior, preferred characteristics of the breed, and judges' individual idiosyncrasies if you plan to get really serious about showing your dog.

Showing your Purebred — Males are Best

If you're planning to show your purebred, you may be better off to get a male. Males tend to be larger, have better coats, and have more of the exaggerated characteristics that show judges look for in the ring.

Common Purebred Disorders

Purebred dogs can often suffer from inherited disorders. These disorders can include disorders of the immune, circulatory, respiratory, endocrine, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems. The following pages describe some of the most common disorders of purebreds (a list of all disorders would probably fill several encyclopedia-sized books!)

Information provided here is for your information only, and is not intended as a substitute for appropriate veterinary diagnosis or care. Consult a veterinarian for information about specific disorders.



Blood and lymphatic disorders

Problems with the blood and lymph systems that have a hereditary component include:

- Autoimmune hemolytic anemia
- Basset hound thrombopathia
- Coagulation (bleeding) disorders
- Cyclic hematopoiesis
- Hemophilia
- Histiocytoma
- Histiocytosis
- Immune-mediated thrombocytopenia
- Lymphedema
- Phosphofructokinase (PFK) deficiency
- Pyruvate kinase (PK) deficiency
- Rare red blood cell abnormalities

- Thrombasthenic thrombopathia
- Von Willebrand's Disease

von Willebrand's Disease

von Willebrand's Disease is a common blood disorder among dogs (and people, as well). It is usually mild, and is caused by the lack of a clotting factor in the blood. Dogs with von Willebrand's Disease will bleed longer and more often than other dogs. They may have nosebleeds, and have more bleeding during surgeries (like neutering or spaying). In many dogs, von Willebrand's Disease is not serious, but in a smaller majority it can be severe.

von Willebrand's Disease is an inherited disorder. Genetic testing for von Willebrand's Disease is available for the following breeds:

- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Drentsche Patrijshond
- Doberman Pinscher
- German Pinscher
- Kerry Blue Terrier
- Manchester Terrier
- Papillon
- Pembroke Welsh Corgi
- Poodle

von Willebrand's Disease is seen in many different breeds and mixed breed dogs. It is common in these breeds:

- Doberman Pinscher
- Scottish Terriers
- Shetland Sheepdog

Other breeds that have a higher than normal chance of the disorder are:

- Basset Hound
- Chesapeake Bay Retriever
- German Shepherd
- German Shorthaired Pointers
- Golden Retriever
- Miniature Dachshund
- Miniature Poodle
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Keeshond
- Manchester Terrier
- Rottweiler
- Standard Dachshund
- Standard Poodle
- Welsh Pembroke Corgi

Cardiovascular disorders

Inherited cardiovascular disorders include:

- Aortic Stenosis
- Atrial Septal Defect
- Cardiomyopathy
- Mitral Valve Dysplasia
- Patent Ductus Arteriosus
- Vascular Ring Anomaly
- Portosystemic Shunt
- Pulmonic Stenosis
- Sick Sinus Syndrome
- Tetralogy of Fallot
- Tricuspid Dysplasia
- Ventricular Septal Defect

Nervous disorders

Nervous system disorders are often seen in purebred dogs. They can occur in many purebred breeds, and are often difficult to diagnose and treat. Disorders of the nervous system of dogs, with an inherited component, include:

- Cerebellar abiotrophy
- Cerebellar hypoplasia
- Cervical vertebral instability (Wobbler syndrome)
- Congenital deafness and vestibular disease
- Deafness
- Degenerative myelopathy
- Globoid cell leukodystrophy
- Hypo-/dysmyelinogenesis
- Hydrocephalus
- Idiopathic epilepsy
- Laryngeal paralysis
- Leukodystrophies
- Lissencephaly
- Lysosomal storage diseases
- Meningitis
- Myasthenia gravis
- Myelodysplasia
- Neuroaxonal dystrophy
- Peripheral neuropathies
- Shaker dog syndrome
- Scotty cramp
- Spina bifida
- Spinal muscular atrophy
- Vertebral stenosis

Skeletal and muscular disorders

Problems with the skeletal and muscular systems are among the most common disorders among purebred dogs. Common disorders include hip and elbow dysplasia, and patellar luxation. Other disorders of the muscular and skeletal system include:

- Cervical vertebral instability (Wobbler syndrome)
- Craniomandibular osteopathy (lion jaw)
- Elbow dysplasia - OCD, osteochondrosis of humeral condyle, fragmented medial coronoid process, ununited anconeal process, incongruent elbow
- Hemivertebra
- Hereditary myopathy
- Hip dysplasia
- Intervertebral disk disease
- Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease
- Masticatory myositis
- Myotonia
- Odontoid process dysplasia
- Osteochondrodysplasia - skeletal dwarfism
- Panosteitis
- Patellar luxation
- X-linked muscular dystrophy

Specific registries record muscular and skeletal health and genetic disorders in dogs, and that provide testing for specific disorders. A good breeder should be affiliated with one or more of these organizations.

The OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) is an organization that tests dogs for a variety of health disorders, including hip dysplasia and elbow dysplasia, and thyroid and cardiac disorders. Reputable breeders will most likely have used the OFA for their testing. You

can search the OFA's online database to determine the relative incidence of health or genetic disorders in specific dog breeds.

You can find more information at the OFA's website at www.offa.org.

The Institute for Genetic Disease Control in Animals (GDC) is a non-profit organization. It is an international open registry for canine orthopedic genetic diseases, eye, heart, cancer, Globoid Cell Leukodystrophy, skin diseases (only for some breeds), and other genetic diseases. The GDC has an online, searchable registry that contains all breeds and known and suspected genetic diseases. The database contains information from veterinary screening of individual dogs.

You can find more information at the GDC's website at www.gdcinstitute.org.

PennHIP, the University of Pennsylvania Hip Improvement Program, is also often used to detect hip dysplasia, or susceptibility to hip dysplasia, in dogs. Canine hip dysplasia is a serious disorder, mostly of large breeds, that can result in osteoarthritis in the hip, and potentially lead to lameness. Reputable breeders often use PennHIP testing to test their dogs for hip dysplasia. Currently, the tests can only be done on puppies over 16 weeks of age.

You can find more information at PennHIP's website at www.pennhip.org.

Hip dysplasia

This occurs when there is a disorder in the way a dog's thigh bone fits into the hip socket. Over time, the joint may degenerate and develop osteoarthritis, causing pain, weakness and lameness in the joint. Hip dysplasia gets

worse with time, can be a crippling disorder, and occurs mainly in large and giant breeds.

Hip dysplasia can be caused by mutations in many different genes, none of which are well identified. As a result, there is no genetic test for hip dysplasia. However, health screening can identify dogs that are likely to develop the disorder. Ask any breeder of large or giant dogs for hip certification in their breeding dogs for several generations back.

Elbow dysplasia

Elbow dysplasia actually refers to a collection of different disorders, including ununited anconeal process, osteochondrosis of the medial humeral condyle, fragmented medial coronoid process, and incongruent elbow. These disorders often affect both front legs, and cause elbow pain and lameness in the forelimbs. It is currently thought that these disorders are actually the result of a single disease, osteochondritis dissecans (OCD). OCD occurs when cartilage develops abnormally.

Elbow dysplasia occurs primarily in large and giant breeds, and affects male dogs more often than females. It is common in the following breeds:

- Basset Hound
- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Bloodhound
- Bouvier des Flandres
- Chow Chow
- German Shepherd
- Golden Retriever
- Great Pyrenees
- Irish Wolfhound
- Labrador Retriever

- Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Rottweiler
- Saint Bernard
- Weimaraner

Like hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia results from disorders in several genes, but it is not known which genes. There is no genetic testing available for the disorder, but health screening can identify dogs that are likely to develop elbow dysplasia. Ask any breeder of large or giant dogs if their breeding dogs for several generations back have been screened for elbow dysplasia.

Patellar luxation

Patellar luxation results from a disorder in the way the patella (knee cap) fits into the femur (thigh bone). Patellar luxation occurs when the knee cap slips out of the groove in the femur. Over time, it can lead to degenerative changes, including osteoarthritis, and can be painful and result in lameness.

Patellar luxation is common in many smaller breeds, including:

- Basset Hound
- Boston Terrier
- Chihuahua
- Lhasa Apso
- Miniature Poodle
- Pomeranian
- Pekingese
- Shih Tzu
- Silky Terrier
- Toy Poodle

- Yorkshire Terrier

While patellar luxation results from disorders in several genes, it is not known which genes cause the disorder. There is no genetic test currently available.

Health screening can identify dogs with patellar luxation. Ask any breeder if their breeding dogs for several generations back have been screened for patellar luxation.

Endocrine disorders

The endocrine system produces hormones that have a wide-ranging effect on the dog's body and brain.

Inherited endocrine disorders include:

- Diabetes mellitus
- Growth-hormone responsive and adrenal sex-hormone dermatoses
- Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's syndrome)
- Hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's disease)
- Hypothyroidism
- Juvenile hyperparathyroidism
- Pituitary dwarfism

Immune disorders

Inherited immune system disorders include:

- Atopy
- Autoimmune hemolytic anemia
- Bullous pemphigoid
- Complement deficiency
- Cyclic hematopoiesis
- German shepherd pyoderma

- Immune-mediated thrombocytopenia
- Lupus erythematosus
- Pemphigus
- Selective Immunoglobulin A deficiency
- Severe combined immunodeficiency
- Weimaraner immunodeficiency

Respiratory disorders

Disorders of the respiratory system with an inherited component include:

- Brachycephalic syndrome
- Hypoplastic trachea
- Laryngeal paralysis
- Tracheal collapse

Skin disorders

Disorders of the skin with an inherited component include:

- Acanthosis nigricans
- Acral lick dermatitis
- Acral mutilation syndrome
- Atopy/allergic inhalant dermatitis
- Bullous pemphigoid
- Canine acne
- Colour dilution alopecia
- Congenital hypotrichosis
- Cutaneous asthenia
- Cutaneous mucinosis
- Dalmatian bronzing syndrome
- Demodicosis/Demodectic mange

- Dermatomyositis and ulcerative dermatosis
- Dermoid sinus
- Ectodermal defect
- Epidermal dysplasia
- Epidermolysis bullosa
- Follicular dysplasias
- Fold dermatitis/pyoderma
- Growth hormone responsive dermatosis
- Ichthyosis
- Lethal acrodermatitis
- Lupus erythematosus
- Lymphedema
- Lupoid dermatosis
- Malassezia dermatitis
- Nodular dermatofibrosis (nevi) and renal cystadenocarcinoma
- Pattern baldness
- Pemphigus
- Perianal fistula
- Psoriasiform-lichenoid dermatosis
- Schnauzer comedo syndrome
- Sebaceous adenitis
- Seborrhea
- Vitamin A-responsive dermatosis
- Vitiligo
- Zinc-responsive dermatosis

Urinary and reproductive disorders

Disorders of urinary and reproductive systems with an inherited component include:

- Cryptorchidism

- Disorders of sexual development
- Familial kidney disease Fanconi syndrome
- Nodular dermatofibrosis and renal cystadenocarcinoma
- Urolithiasis (stones)

Eye disorders

Inherited eye disorders are common in many purebreds. Some disorders can be predicted with genetic testing, but others can only be diagnosed with health testing, which will tell you if the dog has the disorder at a specific point in time.

The CERF (Canine Eye Registration Foundation)

does health and genetic testing for a number of eye-related disorders, including third eyelids, and corneal dystrophy. CERF has a registry for dogs that are certified free of heritable eye disease. Individual dog's identities are confidential and are not released. CERF Certification is valid for 12 months from the date of the exam.

You can find more information on CERF's website at: www.vmdb.org/cerf.html.

Eye disorders include:

- Cataracts
- Collie eye anomaly
- Corneal dystrophy
- Dermoids
- Ectropion
- Entropion
- Exposure keratopathy syndrome
- Eyelash abnormalities - ectopic cilia, distichiasis, trichiasis
- Glaucoma

- Imperforate lacrimal punctum
- Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS)
- Lens luxation
- Microphthalmia (ocular dysgenesis)
- Optic nerve hypoplasia and micropapilla
- Pannus (chronic superficial keratitis)
- Persistent pupillary membranes
- Progressive retinal atrophy
- Third eyelid (nictitating membrane) abnormalities

Cataracts

Cataracts occur when the lens of the eye becomes less transparent. Cataracts can result in blindness if untreated. Most cataracts are inherited, but can occur from trauma or exposure to toxins.

Inherited cataracts have been identified in the following breeds:

- Afghan Hound
- Akita
- Alaskan Malamute
- American Cocker Spaniel
- Australian Cattle Dog (Blue Heeler)
- Australian Shepherd
- Basenji
- Beagle
- Bearded Collie
- Bedlington Terrier
- Belgian Sheepdog
- Belgian Tervuren
- Bichon Frise
- Border Collie
- Boston Terrier
- Bouvier des Flandres
- Brussels Griffon
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Chesapeake Bay Retriever
- Chow Chow
- Clumber Spaniel
- Collie
- Curly-coated Retriever

-
- Dachshund
 - Dalmatian
 - Doberman Pinscher
 - English Cocker Spaniel
 - English Springer Spaniel
 - German Shepherd
 - German Short-haired Pointer
 - Golden Retriever
 - Gordon Setter
 - Great Dane
 - Havanese
 - Irish Setter
 - Irish Wolfhound
 - Italian Greyhound
 - Jack Russell Terrier
 - Japanese Chin
 - Labrador Retriever
 - Lhasa Apso
 - Lowchen
 - Mastiff
 - Miniature Schnauzer
 - Newfoundland
 - Norbottenspets
 - Norwegian Elkhound
 - Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
 - Old English Sheepdog
 - Papillon
 - Pekingese
 - Pembroke Welsh Corgi
 - Portuguese Water Dog
 - Rottweiler
 - Saint Bernard
 - Samoyed
 - Scottish Terrier
 - Shar Pei
 - Shetland Sheepdog
 - Shih Tzu
 - Siberian Husky
 - Smooth Fox Terrier
 - Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier
 - Staffordshire Bull Terrier
 - Standard Poodle
 - Standard Schnauzer
 - Tibetan Spaniel
 - Tibetan Terrier
 - Welsh Springer Spaniel
 - West Highland White Terrier
 - Whippet
 - Wire-haired Fox Terrier
 - Yorkshire Terrier

The specific genes responsible for cataracts are not identified for most breeds. There is no genetic testing available for the disorder, but health screening can identify dogs that are likely to develop the disorder. Ask breeders of any breeds where inherited cataracts have been identified if any of their breeding dogs for several generations back have been screened for cataracts.

Corneal dystrophy

Corneal dystrophy is a disorder of the cornea that usually affects both eyes. Most commonly, it does not impact vision, and is not treated.



Corneal dystrophy can also be called endothelial corneal dystrophy, corneal lipid dystrophy, Boxer corneal ulceration, epithelial/stromal corneal dystrophy, indolent/persistent ulcer, or epithelial erosion.

Breeds affected with corneal dystrophy are:

- Airedale
- Afghan Hound
- American Cocker Spaniel
- Basenji
- Beagle
- Bearded Collie
- Bichon Frise
- Boston Terrier
- Boxer
- Briard
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Chihuahua
- Chow Chow
- Dachshund
- English Springer Spaniel
- German Shepherd
- Golden Retriever
- Irish Wolfhound
- Labrador Retriever
- Miniature Pinscher
- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
- Pembroke Welsh Corgi
- Rough Collie
- Samoyed
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Siberian Husky
- Vizsla

The specific genes responsible for corneal dystrophy are not identified for most breeds. There is no genetic testing available for the disorder, but health screening can identify dogs that currently have corneal dystrophy. You

should ask breeders of any breeds where corneal dystrophy have been identified if any of their breeding dogs for several generations back have been screened.

Eyelash abnormalities

While normally not a serious disorder, these can be uncomfortable for the dog. Common eyelash disorders are: distichiasis (where extra eyelashes grow on the inside edge of the eyelid), ectopic cilia (where extra eyelashes grow through the eyelid to inside the eye), and trichiasis (where eyelashes turn inward).

Distichiasis is seen in the following breeds:

- American Cocker Spaniel
- Australian Shepherd
- Bedlington Terrier
- Boston Terrier
- English Bulldog
- Boxer
- Cardigan Welsh Corgi
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Chesapeake Bay Retriever
- Clumber Spaniel
- Collie
- Curly-coated Retriever
- Dachsund
- Doberman Pinscher
- Field Spaniel
- English Cocker Spaniel
- Flat-coated Retriever
- German Shepherd
- German Short-haired Pointer
- Golden Retriever
- Great Dane
- Irish Setter
- Labrador Retriever
- Lhasa Apso
- Lowchen
- Miniature Poodle
- Norwegian Elkhound
- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
- Pekingese
- Pembroke Welsh Corgi
- Pomeranian
- Portuguese Water Dog

- Pug
- Samoyed
- Saint Bernard
- Shih Tzu
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Sussex Spaniel
- Tibetan Spaniel
- Toy Poodle
- Weimaraner
- Welsh Springer Spaniel
- Yorkshire Terrier

Ectopic cilia is seen in the following breeds:

- Bulldog
- Lhasa Apso
- Pekingese
- Shih Tzu

Trichiasis is seen in American Cocker Spaniels.

It is not known how eyelash abnormalities are inherited, and there is no genetic testing available, although health screening can identify dogs with eyelash abnormalities. You can ask breeders if any of their breeding dogs have been screened for eyelash abnormalities. However, given that eyelash abnormalities are generally uncomfortable, rather than fatal or debilitating for the dog, you may even consider a dog with eyelash abnormalities in its pedigree.

Progressive renal atrophy

Progressive renal atrophy occurs when cells in the dog's retina begin to die. It can cause blindness, and there is no treatment.

Specific genes that lead to progressive renal atrophy are quickly being identified in many breeds.



Related disorders include: rod-cone dysplasia, retinal degeneration, early retinal degeneration, central/generalized progressive retinal atrophy, progressive rod-cone degeneration, hemeralopia (day blindness), and nyctalopia (night-blindness).

Progressive renal atrophy is seen in the following breeds:

- Akita
- Australian Cattle Dog
- Australian Shepherd
- American Cocker Spaniel
- Basenji
- Beagle
- Belgian Sheepdog
- Border Collie
- Briard
- Brittany Spaniel
- Cairn Terrier
- Cardigan Welsh Corgi
- Chesapeake Bay Retriever
- Collie
- Dachshund
- English Cocker Spaniel
- English Springer Spaniel
- Golden Retriever
- Labrador Retriever
- Shetland Sheepdog
- English Springer Spaniel

- German Shepherd
- German Short-haired Pointer
- Golden Retriever
- Gordon Setter
- Great Dane
- Greyhound
- Irish Setter
- Golden Retriever
- Labrador Retriever
- Mastiff
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Norwegian Elkhound
- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
- Old English Sheepdog
- Papillon
- Pekingese
- Miniature Poodle
- Portuguese Water Dog
- Rottweiler
- Samoyed
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Shih Tzu
- Siberian Husky
- Tibetan Spaniel
- Tibetan Terrier
- Toy Poodle
- Welsh Springer Spaniel
- Yorkshire Terrier

Genetic testing is becoming available for many different breeds. You should ask breeders of breeds where progressive renal atrophy has been identified if any of their breeding dogs, for several generations back, were screened for the disorder.

Retinal dysplasia

Retinal dysplasia occurs when the retina is abnormally developed at birth. It can result from a virus before birth, but is more commonly inherited. Some dogs develop limited vision loss or blindness. Many dogs with milder forms of retinal dysplasia may compensate so well by using their excellent senses of smell and hearing that their owners are never aware that they have retinal dysplasia! However, the disorder can be more serious in some dogs, and ultimately result in blindness.

Retinal dysplasia is seen in the following breeds:

-
- Akita
 - American Cocker Spaniel
 - Australian Shepherd
 - Beagle
 - Bedlington Terrier
 - Belgian Malinois
 - Border Terrier
 - Bull Mastiff
 - Cairn Terrier
 - Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
 - Clumber Spaniel
 - Collie
 - English Springer Spaniel
 - Field Spaniel
 - German Shepherd
 - Golden Retriever
 - Gordon Setter
 - Labrador Retriever
 - Mastiff
 - Norwegian Elkhound
 - Old English Sheepdog
 - Pembroke Welsh Corgi
 - Rottweiler
 - Samoyed
 - Sealyham Terrier
 - Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier
 - Sussex Spaniel
 - Yorkshire Terrier

In many breeds, retinal dysplasia is inherited. There is no genetic testing available, although health screening can identify dogs with the disorder. Ask breeders if any if

their breeding dogs were screened, for several generations back, for retinal dysplasia.

Gastrointestinal disorders

Disorders of the gastrointestinal system include:

- Chronic hepatitis
- Cleft lip
- Cleft palate
- Copper-associated hepatitis
- Copper toxicosis
- Exocrine pancreatic insufficiency
- Gastric dilatation-volvulus (bloat)
- Gluten (wheat)-sensitive enteropathy
- Histiocytic ulcerative colitis
- Hyperlipoproteinemia
- Immunoproliferative enteropathy/lymphocytic-plasmacytic enteritis
- Intestinal lymphangiectasia
- Megaesophagus
- Pancreatitis
- Perianal fistula
- Portosystemic shunt
- Protein-losing enteropathy
- Protein-losing enteropathy and nephropathy
- Pyloric stenosis
- Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth

Other disorders

Purebreds can also suffer from other inherited disorders, including rarer disorders of the blood, skin, cardiovascular, endocrine, gastrointestinal, immune,

nervous, respiratory, and urinary and reproductive systems. Be sure to ask a reputable breeder, or consult your veterinarian, about diseases common to specific breeds.

Congratulations

Bringing Your New Dog Home



There's an entire other book involved in caring for your dog once it's home, but these tips can help you to make your new friend's arrival as happy and calm as possible.

Tips for bringing your new furry friend home

- Make sure that you have a secure, safe way to transport your puppy. I once saw an older puppy transported home for the first time on a city bus, without a collar, leash, or crate! The puppy's young owners were taking a serious risk — the puppy could easily have gotten out of their control and ended up lost, or worse, run out in traffic.
- Don't bring your puppy home during a major holiday or a child's birthday. These times can be filled with activity, and be far too stressful for your new puppy.

- Make sure that you have everything that your new dog will need. This includes food, water, a place to sleep, a collar and tags, and, most of all, a calm, stress-free environment.
- Make sure your whole family knows the rules for the new dog. Will it be allowed to sleep in their beds, and sit on the furniture, for example?
- Set up ground rules for who will take care of the puppy. Who will be the one who gets up at 3:00 am to comfort a lonely and scared little dog?
- Puppy proof your house. This includes putting shoes, electrical cords, and cat food out of reach. Puppy proofing may be a good idea even for an older dog; at least until you're sure it won't chew your shoes or knock over precious figurines.
- Whatever you do, allow yourself and your new furry companion time to adjust. It may take a while before you're used to each other!

What To Do If You Have Problems

No matter how careful you are, or how reputable your dog breeder is, you may run into problems once you bring your puppy home. You may find that puppy is unhealthy, is not the breed you thought it was, or some other concern. In the worst case scenario, the puppy may even die.

The first thing you should do is talk to the breeder where you got the puppy. In most cases, a reputable breeder will be able to resolve your problems.

You should know that there are also laws in some areas that protect you if you have problems. A section of the California Health and Safety Code has a provision for the sale of puppies and cats. Many other states have laws (which are usually referred to as puppy lemon laws), including Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Minnesota,

Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Vermont. Depending on the area, these laws may:

- give you the right to return a sick or dead puppy for a refund or replacement
- give you the option to keep the puppy, but have it treated and get reimbursed for veterinary expenses

Thanks for reading our guide on getting a new dog and we hope that it helped you in your decision in choosing your new best friend. Check us out on the web and if you truly enjoyed this guide feel free to send us a comment.

<http://www.happyhealthypuppy.com>

Breeders' Lingo

Agility

An owner-dog event that is similar to an obstacle course or steeplechase. Some people refer to Frisbee events as agility events.

AKC

American Kennel Club

AWA

Animal Welfare Act

Bitch

A female dog.

Breed Disposition

Dogs with an increased risk for a genetic disease are said to have a breed predisposition for the disease.

Breeder

A person who owns a male or female dog that is allowed to mate to produce puppies. Reputable breeders are deeply concerned about the health and welfare of their dogs. Breeders that are not reputable often care more about profit than the dogs' well being.

Breeding facility

Technically, any facility where dogs are mated to produce puppies. The term breeding facility is often used to describe the horrible facilities at puppy mills.

CKC

Canadian Kennel Club

CERF

Canine Eye Registration Foundation

Conformation

Judging that occurs according to the breed standard, or ideals for the physical and mental characteristics of the breed.

Dam

A puppy's mother.

GDC

Institute for Genetic Disease Control in Animals

OFA

Orthopedic Foundation for Animals

Out of Coat

A female dog is said to be out of coat when her fur is thinner and less shiny than normal because of her pregnancy. Her fur should still be healthy, but less luxurious.

PennHIP

University of Pennsylvania Hip Improvement Program

Puppy Mill

A breeding facility that operates almost solely to generate a profit. Dogs in puppy mills are most often kept in horrible conditions, and exist only to line the pockets of the operators of the mill.

Reputable breeder

A breeder that operates with concern for the health and well being of the puppies and the puppies' mother and father. A reputable breeder will most likely be registered with a local kennel club, allow you to inspect their facility and view the puppy's mother, and ensure that the puppy's parents are tested for health and genetic diseases.

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

RSPCA

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Sire

A puppy's father.

SPCA

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Standard

The ideal for a breed, which encompasses both the physical (like coat and size) and mental (like intelligence and temperament).

Dog Quotes

"You can say any fool thing to a dog, and the dog will give you this look that says, 'My God, you're RIGHT! I NEVER would've thought of that!'"

Dave Barry

"The more people I meet the more I like my dog."

Unknown

"To err is human, to forgive, canine."

Unknown

"Dogs are our link to paradise. They don't know evil or jealousy or discontent. To sit with a dog on a hillside on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden, where doing nothing was not boring — it was peace."

Milan Kundera



"Money will buy you a pretty good dog, but it won't buy the wag of his tail."

Henry Wheeler Shaw

"My dog is worried about the economy because Alpo is up to 99 cents a can. That's almost \$7.00 in dog money."

Joe Weinstein

"Some days you're the dog, some days you're the hydrant."

Unknown

"It's a dog eat dog world, Woody, and I'm wearing milk bone underwear."

Norm from Cheers

"Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."

Roger Caras

"If your dog thinks you're the greatest person in the world, don't seek a second opinion."

Jim Fiebig

"Thorns may hurt you, men desert you, sunlight turn to fog; but you're never friendless ever, if you have a dog."

Douglas Mallock

"To keep a true perspective of one's importance, everyone should have a dog that will worship him and a cat that will ignore him."

Dereke Bruce

"There is no psychiatrist in the world like a puppy licking your face."

Ben Williams

"If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went."

Unknown

"The dog's kennel is not the place to keep a sausage."
Danish Proverb

"The reason dogs have so many friends is because they wag their tails instead of their tongues."
Unknown

"If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you; that is the principal difference between a dog and a man."
Mark Twain

"Children and dogs are as necessary to the welfare of the country as Wall Street and the railroads."
Harry S. Truman

"It came to me that every time I lose a dog they take a piece of my heart with them. And every new dog who comes into my life gifts me with a piece of their heart. If I live long enough, all the components of my heart will be dog, and I will become as generous and loving as they are."
Cheryl Zuccaro

"If you think dogs can't count, try putting three dog biscuits in your pocket and then giving Fido only two of them."
Phil Pastoret

"My goal in life is to be as good a person as my dog already thinks I am."
Unknown

"When you point out something to a dog, he looks at your finger."
J. Bryan

"Dogs read the world through their noses and write their history in urine."
J. R. Ackerley

"The fidelity of a dog is a precious gift demanding no less binding moral responsibilities than the friendship of a human being. The bond with a true dog is as lasting as the ties of this earth can ever be."

Konrad Lorenz

"I sometimes look into the face of my dog Stan and see wistful sadness and existential angst when all he is actually doing is slowly scanning the ceiling for flies."

Merrill Markoe

"I wonder what goes through his mind when he sees us peeing in his water bowl."

Penny Ward Moser

"A man's soul can be judged by the way he treats his dog."

Charles Doran

"Ever consider what they must think of us? I mean, here we come back from a grocery store with the most amazing haul: chicken, pork, half cow. They must think we're the greatest hunters on earth!"

Anne Tyler

"If I have any beliefs about immortality, it is that certain dogs I have known will go to heaven, and very, very few persons."

James Thurber

"Cat's Motto: No matter what you've done wrong, always try to make it look like the dog did it."

Unknown

"He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion."

Unknown

"If you want the best seat in the house ... move the dog."

Unknown

"If your dog is too fat, you are not getting enough exercise."

Unknown

"Dogs feel very strongly that they should always go with you in the car, in case the need should arise for them to bark violently at nothing right in your ear."

Dave Barry

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Ways To Pamper Your Dog

1. Buy your new puppy a home-made doggie bakery treat! Dog bakeries are a huge business these days, and have yummy offerings like doggie biscuits and home-made ice cream. If you can't find a doggie bakery near you, you can always make your own, using the recipe below!

Crunchy, yummy dog cookies

3/4 cup wheat germ

3/4 cup powdered milk

1 egg

1 jar beef baby food

1/2 baby food jar of water

Mix all ingredients in a bowl, and drop on a cookie sheet with a spoon. The cookies should be the size of a quarter. Bake for 20 minutes at 350F. Store the cookies in the refrigerator.

2. Get your puppy some designer duds. Expensive, brand-name clothes aren't just for people any more. You can find some gorgeous doggie leashes and sweaters from some of the best designers. Check out the latest Prada and Gucci collections for some swanky dog collars.
3. Get a family portrait done! Better yet, get a portrait of just your pooch, alone.
4. Buy your puppy an extra-comfy dog bed. A bed lined with soft fleece is ideal, and make sure he'll have lots of room. If you really want to splurge, you can even buy him a swanky designer couch or chaise lounge to match your furniture.

5. Give your puppy a day at the doggie spa! Get his fur washed, cut, and blown dry, and have his nails done. He'll look like a prince!
6. Take your puppy on a special trip. Dogs love a trip to the beach or a walk along some country trails. Make sure you bring lots of treats and water, and take the time to really enjoy his company. He'll love you for it.
7. Give your puppy extra hugs and cuddles. This one's free; you can do it at home, and doesn't take anything more than an extra five or ten minutes. Your puppy will probably love this more than anything else on this list.
8. Volunteer at the local animal shelter. Your pup may not get the direct benefits of this one, but you'll end up really helping out some less-fortunate dogs.
9. Throw your dog a party. Get a bunch of his doggie friends and even some of his favourite people together, fill up the doggie dishes with treats, and have a blast!
10. Make a lemon flea dip. Just add three cut lemons, 1/4 cup baking soda, and 1/2 teaspoon shampoo to 1 quart of boiling water. Boil for one hour, cool, and strain. Dip a sponge in the water, drizzle onto your dog's coat, and massage in. Your dog will love you for the massage, and the citrus oils help repel fleas.
11. Make sure that you have your vet's emergency number, and the number of a 24-hour veterinary clinic, on hand at all times. Your dog will love you if there's ever an emergency.

12. Buy your pup a swanky new dog house or dog run. Dogs love a place all of their own to hang out and relax.
13. Get your doggie a harness for the car to keep him safe in case of an accident. Smaller dogs can get a special car seat.
14. Brush your puppy every day. This brings out the skin's natural oils, and keeps their fur shiny and healthy.
15. Take your puppy to an obedience class. Your dog will love the interaction with other animals and the one-on-one attention from you. If you already have a perfectly behaved dog, consider trying an agility training class.
16. If your puppy's overweight, consider putting him on a low-calorie food, or cut back on the calories. This one might make him a little grumpy in the short term, but it'll add years to his life and spring to his step.
17. Take him to a pet store, and buy him a new favorite toy. Lots of dogs love Kongs — you stuff the Kong with treats or peanut butter, and your dog has a blast trying to get it out. Stuffed animals, Nylabone or Greenies dental chews, and even tennis balls are big with most dogs.
18. Get your dog a cut new dog tag. Besides being adorable, a dog tag can help make sure that your puppy is returned to you safe and sound if he's ever lost.
19. Give your dog a massage! Most dogs love this, as long as you stay away from tender parts like feet and ears.
20. Buy pet insurance for your puppy! Vet treatments can be extremely expensive,

especially for serious problems like injuries from an accident or cancer. Insurance will ensure that you're able to take care of your pup if something goes terribly wrong.

21. Send your puppy for a day out at an exclusive doggie hotel or daycare. Today, wire cages and crammed kennels are a thing of the past for pampered pooches. Doggie daycares offer home-like settings, romps with other dogs, personalized play, tasty treats and premium dog foods, and even swimming pools.

Top Ten Grooming Tips!

1. What's the most important tip for grooming your dog? If you're lucky enough to have a puppy, start grooming your puppy **now!** You will save yourself a world of struggling to get your dog to sit still if you teach your puppy now that grooming is a fun, loving, relaxing experience.
2. Don't bathe your dog too often. Only once every month or two is necessary. Over washing can lead to dry, irritated skin and strip essential oils from your dog's skin.
3. Brush your dog daily when shedding to remove the dead hair. You only need to brush your dog once a week when not shedding.
4. Clip your dog's claws about every two weeks. Be very careful not to clip the pink part of the claw — this is extremely painful for a dog.
5. Use a spray-on conditioner to help keep your dog's coat glossy and shiny. Combine 1 to 2 tablespoons of Mane & Tail Conditioner (or similar type of dog or horse conditioner) and enough water to fill a ½ gallon spray bottle. Shake the spray bottle up each time you use it! You can use the conditioner every time you brush your dog.
6. Only brush your dog's fur when it's after spraying with the spray-on conditioner. Dry fur is weaker and can break more easily.
7. Never, under any circumstances, use a scissor to cut out the mats behind the ears on your dog! It is extremely easy to cut the skin. Use a fine/medium tooth comb, and take your time.

8. When grooming, check your dog's skin for anything out of the ordinary, such as hotspots. Hotspots are moist areas that can appear when your dog continually chews on a particular spot. Hotspots can be caused by flea bites, or not rinsing well enough when bathing, and can also occur under hair mats.
9. Remove mats from your dog's fur before bathing. Bathing tightens any mats, making them nearly impossible to remove.
10. Most dogs lose their coat each summer — even indoor dogs. Shedding is a response to changes in light levels, rather than changes in temperature. This explains when even indoor dogs shed in the summer!
11. **Special Bonus Tip!** Brush your dog once a week. If you wait longer, you risk spending more time working out mats that will appear!