

Advice for Puppy Buyers

Before you buy

- ☺ Choose a type of dog to suit your lifestyle.
- ☺ Make sure that your home situation is suitable for the type of dog you think you want.
- ☺ Find out the history of your chosen breed and what its purpose was in the past. For example hunting, retrieving, pointing, sight hound, catching vermin, companion, rounding up. This will affect the lifestyle they need.
- ☺ Research how a dog's size and shape (conformation) affects its health and well-being.
- ☺ Avoid extreme body shapes and sizes as these can cause pain and discomfort and result in costly vet bills.
- ☺ Avoid unnatural features which affect a dog's ability to live a normal life. Such as wrinkled skin, dwarfism, protruding eyes, flat faces, closed nostrils, absence of tail, etc.
- ☺ Don't place too much importance on colour or how a dog looks or whether a particular breed is in fashion. These are superficial things.
- ☺ Research the breed characteristics, particularly the exercise needs, activities needs and grooming requirements.
- ☺ Research the breed-related genetic health and welfare issues of your chosen breed (or mixed breed).
- ☺ Expect to have to wait some time before finding the right breeder and puppy. It is more important to get this right than to rush.



Advice for Puppy Buyers

Choosing a breeder

- ☺ Look for a responsible breeder who puts dog health and welfare first.
- ☺ Contact the breed club of the breed (or crossbreed). They often have a Puppy Co-ordinator who will know breeders who have puppies available.
- ☺ Be prepared to wait.
- ☺ Visit more than one breeder before choosing.
- ☺ Only buy from a breeder who is happy to use The Puppy Contract.
- ☺ Only buy from a breeder who is happy to talk about the breed health issues.
- ☺ Visit the breeder and check where the breeding mother lives and how she is looked after.
- ☺ If possible, meet the stud dog and his owner.
- ☺ Observe the temperament of both parents. They should be calm, friendly and confident.
- ☺ Make sure the breeder is registered with a vet.
- ☺ Visit your chosen breeder more than once.
- ☺ Don't take children with you when visiting a breeder. This can lead to emotional or impulse purchase.
- ☺ Be extremely cautious when finding a breeder online. All of the above applies.
- ☺ Always see the litter of puppies with their mother and watch her interacting with them.
- ☺ Note the personalities of each individual puppy and think about which one suits your family.
- ☺ Keep the contact details of the breeder, including address, email and phone number.



Advice for Puppy Buyers

Questions to ask a breeder

- ☺ If buying a pedigree dog ask to see a 5 generation pedigree. Check that the same dog's name does not appear on both sides of the pedigree.
- ☺ If you cannot meet the stud dog, ask questions about his character. Ask to see a photo.
- ☺ Ask about the health testing for inherited diseases of both parents and if possible grandparents
- ☺ Ask to be shown the original health test results certificates of both parents (Canine Health Schemes and DNA test certificates)
- ☺ Check the puppies' microchip registration. The breeder's name should be recorded as the first owner.
- ☺ Puppies should usually receive their first vaccinations at six to eight weeks. Ask about this.
- ☺ Hip dysplasia and elbow dysplasia are fairly common in medium to large size dogs. If severe these can cause long term pain and disability or require costly surgery. In addition to asking for the parents test results, ask if the breeder used the Kennel Club's Estimated Breeding Value (EBV) calculation. The average EBV score for both parents and the confidence rating will provide more accurate information than the physical test alone.
- ☺ Has a vet given the puppies a clean bill of health?
- ☺ Vaccinations prevent puppies from getting deadly diseases. Puppies should usually receive their first ones around eight weeks of age. Ask if this has been done and which vaccines have been used.
- ☺ The breeder should ask you about your home and lifestyle and ability to care for your dog. Take a photo to show the breeder your house and garden.
- ☺ A good breeder will offer to take a dog back if, for any reason, an owner can no longer care for it. Ask about this.



Advice for Puppy Buyers

If your puppy could think and speak

- ☺ I can feel joy, pain, fear and loneliness, just like you.
- ☺ Who will choose me? Who will my new carer be?
- ☺ Will they know how to care for me? Will I feel safe? Will I be loved?
- ☺ Will they take care of my health and welfare?
- ☺ Will I have human company most of the time or will I be left alone for hours?
- ☺ Will I be allowed to have peace and quiet when I need it?
- ☺ Will I be comfortable and warm?
- ☺ Will I be groomed regularly?
- ☺ Will I have plenty of walks and opportunities to explore and smell things?
- ☺ Will I be allowed to run free or play?
- ☺ Will they give me some fun training and mental challenges?
- ☺ Will they take me to the vet and keep up to date with health care?
- ☺ Will they feed me healthy food and make sure that I don't become too fat or too thin?
- ☺ Please don't treat me as a fashion accessory or status symbol.

