

Listen to the advice of the breeder regarding exercise and feeding. As a puppy owner you will be offered advice from many sources **DO NOT** assume that all the advice you receive is appropriate. Use your common sense or check the information before acting on it; remember the breeder has raised the puppies and dogs before so will have the most knowledge.

Breeders should be prepared to help with problems you may experience and should be responsible for all litters they breed.

Most reputable breeders will insist on the dog being returned to them if you are unable to keep it. Obviously your puppy will quickly become part of your family, however if circumstances dictate that you can no longer care for him/her you need to have the security of being able to return the pup/dog.

Sadly all too often puppies are sold to people who have little knowledge or understanding of dogs and insufficient time and facilities to bring up a puppy. Many owners of these dogs felt that if they had more information when looking for a dog and better support from breeders, the outcome would have been different. Some would have delayed their purchase or chosen a more suitable breed had they approached a specialist breeder rather than a commercial outlet, other felt that with support their problems could have been overcome and the dog become a welcome addition to their family.

If in doubt, don't buy until you have taken more advice. If you have decided on a specific breed ensure that you have researched it fully and visited owners of the breed so you can see the breed in its own home environment. Please make sure that your experience, understanding and circumstances are appropriate to the behaviour and temperament of the breed.



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HOMING A PUPPY



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The decision to buy a puppy is exciting and often life changing. In order to have a happy, healthy pet it is important to buy your pup from a knowledgeable and reputable source.

Generally it is not recommended to buy a puppy that is advertised in the small advertisements of a local or national newspaper. Reputable breeders rarely need to advertise. Do not buy from advertisements offering several different breeds or from pet shops or establishments specialising in the sale of dogs. The puppies offered for sale at this type of establishment, commonly called 'Puppy Farms', are likely to have been commercially bred, possibly many miles away from their place of sale and may have changed hands several times. Puppies purchased from this source often have severe mental and physical problems caused by breeding for profit rather than for temperament or health. Please do not add to the profits of these unscrupulous traders.

Puppies can sell easily and are all too often bred by people with little or no knowledge of how to rear a litter. They will be unable or unwilling to help you should you have a problem. You should always ask for a receipt as proof of purchase and payment should you have a problem.

Choose a responsible breeder. Be prepared to wait for the litter to be old enough to go to their new home. It is unlikely that you will be able to take your puppy away on the first visit. Puppies should go to their new homes after the age of seven weeks.

Many breeders encourage new owners to visit several times as the puppies are growing. This gives times for you to ask questions, to see the mum and pups as well as the puppies interacting and to see how your chosen puppy behaves away from the rest of the litter. It also gives you time to be certain that a puppy is really for you and to make the necessary arrangements for bringing the pup home.

When you visit the puppies you should see them in their normal environment, such as their pen or bed area. The area should be clean and have lots of stimulating toys and objects for them to explore. Ideally it should be in the house rather than away from everyone in a shed. The pups should be clean, feel heavy for their size and be bright and friendly. The mother of the pups should show no signs of fear or aggression and the puppies should be confident and be happy to be handled. The behaviour of the mother is a good indication of the likely behaviour of the puppies. It is also a good idea to make arrangements to visit the stud dog or father, if he is not in the same household, as he too will have an influence on the puppies' temperaments.

With your puppy you should get a diet sheet, a worming schedule and a copy of the puppy's pedigree (a 5 generation pedigree). It is strongly advised that you insure your puppy with a reputable animal insurance company recommended by the breeder or your vet.

Both parents of the puppies may well have been checked for hereditary defect under the British Veterinary Association (BVA) schemes. Pedigrees used for breeding should have a clean bill of health e.g. appropriate hip scores, clear eye certificate, kidney function blood test.

CHECK LIST

1. Is the mother and pups healthy?
2. Is the mum and pups confident and friendly?
3. Do they live indoors with the family?
4. Are the parents hipscored? (If a requirement of the breed)
5. Have the parents had their eyes tested? (If a requirement of the breed)
6. Are the puppies Irish Kennel Club or Kennel Club registered?
7. If Irish Kennel Club registered, do they have a microchip number?
8. Have the puppies undergone a worming program? Which wormer was used?
9. What is the exact date of birth of the puppies?
10. Can you return the puppy if there is a problem?

Remember that no breeder can guarantee that a puppy will be free of all hereditary defects or health problems. Dogs are animals, not machines, and much depends on how you rear, exercise and train your dog.