



Before You Bring Home That Puppy...

A few things to think about by: Kelly and Bentley Beauparland



A dog is a lifetime commitment and there is a lot to consider **BEFORE** you buy or adopt. Your pet will need, and is entitled to, your care, time, patience, love, and financial commitment. **DON'T BE IMPULSIVE!**

PLEASE take the time to consider the following questions. Think ahead, not just to next week or next month, but to 15+ years from now. Your new puppy should grow up to become a valued family member for his/her entire life, and not a plaything or novelty item that may later be ignored or relegated to a chain in the backyard. Be truthful with yourself – don't make a hasty decision you may regret, and then add to the growing number of homeless dogs being abandoned in shelters.

1. Have you done any research into what breed, size, and age of dog may be right for you?
2. Have you considered your lifestyle? How many hours will your puppy be home alone? Do you understand the benefits/limitations of crating?
3. Are you going to be upset if you come home to a mess, chewed woodwork, ruined furniture, or garbage strewn throughout the house?
4. Puppies don't train themselves. Are you willing to invest time and money in obedience classes?
5. Will you be able to satisfy the puppy's excitement & exercise needs when you get home tired but the pup wants to play and needs a walk?
6. When you go on vacation, will the dog travel with you? Will he be welcomed? If not, who will honestly not mind taking care of him? Can you afford to board him?
7. Will you be able to pay not only the yearly vet bills for shots, heartworm test/preventatives, and flea/tick meds, but also the unexpected costs when your puppy gets into something he shouldn't, or develops an illness?
8. Can you provide or afford grooming & general hygiene needs?
9. Will you be able to provide not only healthy, nutritious food for your dog, but also chewies, treats, toys, bowls, beds, collar, ID tags, licensing, and other needs?
10. Do you have or plan to have children? Do you have the patience to care for both a child and a puppy? Will you teach your child the proper way to treat a pet? What will happen if the dog doesn't get along well with children?
11. Does everyone in the family want a dog? Who will be the main caretaker? Do you realize that most children are too young to assume the burden of care, and that, in the end, it will probably fall on Mom or Dad to feed, exercise, train, and clean up after him/her?
12. Have you considered other family members/friends who visit regularly? Are there allergies or aversions to animals?
13. Will your new puppy get along with your other pets?
14. Do you live in an apartment? Do you have a securely fenced yard? If not, are you willing to go outside with your dog at all hours of the day or night, in any kind of weather?

If you know in your heart that you are ready to make a lifetime commitment to a new four-footed family member, please **DO NOT BUY FROM A PETSTORE!** At least 99% of all pet store puppies come from puppy mills! Instead, consider one of the following options:

- **RESCUE GROUPS** will work with you to find a puppy or dog which is best suited for you and your family. If you want a pure-bred dog,

there is probably a rescue group for the breed you choose. Rescues have YOUR best interests in mind as well as the dog.

- **HUMANE SOCIETIES AND ANIMAL SHELTERS** have many dogs that need good homes, too. Although they may not always have puppies, there are many advantages to adopting an older dog. And at least a quarter of all dogs surrendered to animal shelters are purebred!
- **WWW.PETFINDER.COM/ WWW.PETS911.COM** will show you dogs of all ages, breeds, & sizes that need homes in your area as well as across the country.

For those who want a well-bred, healthy, good-natured puppy with a known history, there are many good, responsible pet breeders who will be happy to talk with you. However, you must do your homework. . Many pets advertised for sale in newspapers and on the internet come from Puppy Mills or disreputable Back Yard Breeders (BYB). These people are in the "pet business"

purely to make a profit. They do not care about the quality, health or behavior of the "product" they sell. They are only interested in making a profit from selling animals. The less they provide for the animals, the more money they make.

Before buying a pet from a classified ad seller, it is wise to call your local shelter, groomers, and/or vet and ask if they have any information about the breeder. These animal care professionals may be aware of the reputation of the breeder you are considering. Your local police or sheriff's department will also be able to tell you if complaints have been filed against the person.

Take a look at the Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project's "Guide to Finding Your Perfect Pet," "Red Flags: Disreputable Breeders" and "Identifying a Quality Breeder" fact sheets, or the web pages listed below, to help you make an informed decision.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

- AKC Recognized Breeds Listing, http://www.akc.org/breeds/breeds_a.cfm
- UKC Website Breed Information Section, <http://www.ukcdogs.com/breeds/>
- "How Much Will That Pet Really Cost?" <http://www.petpeoplesplace.com/resources/articles/dogs/020-01.htm>
- ASPCA Calculating Pet Care Costs: http://www.asPCA.org/site/PageServer?pagename=adopt_petcarecosts
- Canine Crusaders' "Responsible Pet Ownership" : <http://www.dogsaver.org/caninecrusaders/responsible.htm>
- PuppymillRescue Pet Shop puppy horror stories: <http://www.puppymillrescue.com/petstorehorror1.htm>
- Pets 911, a coalition of many major national organizations: <http://www.pets911.com>
- Pet Finder: <http://www.petfinder.org>
- WPMP "Guide to Finding Your Perfect Pet," <http://www.nowisconsinpuppymills.com/petguide.html>
- WPMP "Red Flags: Disreputable Breeders" page: <http://www.nowisconsinpuppymills.com/redflags.html>
- WPMP "Identifying a Quality Breeder" page: <http://www.nowisconsinpuppymills.com/goodbreeders.html>