

Kelsey Canine Medical Center's Guidelines for Purchasing a New Puppy

1. Get Ready Get Set...Slow Down and Ask Yourself

- Why do you want a dog? Pet/companion, for show, breeding, hunting, protection, jogging partner, couch potato?
- Do you have the time to invest?
- Are you in an apartment? A house? Is your yard fenced?
- Are you single? Retired? Married? With small children?
- How often do you travel and for how long?
- Do you or your family members have pet allergies?

2. Understand the Basics: Are you ready for the rest of what will be required for your new best friend?

- Veterinary Care- Your dog will need regular wellness exams, vaccinations, parasite control, microchipping, spay/neuter surgery, and dental care.
- Shelter- Every pet needs a crate or kennel of some type.
- Exercise/Companionship- Most dogs require daily walks or ball throwing to let their energy out.
- Training- For a new puppy it is essential to spend time training them to become obedient, socialized, and housebroken.
- Grooming- Some pets require frequent bathing, clipping, and brushing.
- Basic Supplies- water/food bowl, leashes, collars, toys, shampoo etc.
- Pet Insurance- With advancements in veterinary medical care, this is something to consider.

3. Do Your Homework!

- Selecting a Breed

Don't choose a breed solely on its looks as a puppy.

- Questions to answer:

→ How big do they get?

→ What's their breed temperament?

→ What's the parents temperament?

→ How much grooming is required?

→ Are they good with children?

→ How much exercise do they require?

→ Are there any common medical or genetic problems related to the breed?

→ How much energy does the breed have?

- A Few Other Considerations:

→ Do you have other pets to consider?

→ How much shedding is acceptable?

→ Do you want a male or female?

Where to Start?

- Call a veterinarian, go to the library , call a breeder, talk to owners of the breed, search online- www.akc.org (American Kennel Club)
- Have you considered an adult?
- Male or Female? Look for a dog that shows reciprocal interest/affection.
- If you are selecting a dog for protection, remember you don't necessarily have to purchase a large aggressive dog.
- Purebred or Mix breed?

Purchasing a purebred dog offers the main advantage of knowing with a lot more certainty the traits and characteristics your puppy will display later in life. However mix breeds make great companions with usually fewer inherited medical conditions and cost less. Mars even offers a mixed breed DNA Test.

Where to look?

Breeders:

"I've always said a good breeder should be as interested in you as you are in them and their puppies," --Dr. Kelsey

1. Some breeders are registered through the American Kennel Club. You can visit their website at www.akc.org. Also call several veterinarians and check the local paper.
2. Get to know the breeder before you purchase one of their puppies.
3. Questions to Ask a Breeder:
 - Ask to see the AKC registration papers.
 - Names and numbers of people who have bought from them in the past
 - How often is the female bred?

- Ask to see the whole litter.
 - Ask to see the puppies' environment.
 - What type of health guarantee does the breeder offer?
 - What vaccinations have been administered?
 - Have the puppies been to the vet?
 - Are there any known medical conditions of the parents?
 - Where are the puppies housed- outside, inside, a kennel?
 - Does the breeder belong to any breed clubs?
 - How long has the breeder been breeding?
 - Will the breeder ever take the dog back or assist you in finding a home if needed?
 - Get everything in writing!
4. Questions a Breeder Should Ask a Potential Owner:
- Do you have other pets?
 - Is this the first time you've owned a dog?
 - Do you travel much?
 - Where will he/she stay when you're gone?
 - Do you have children?
 - What is a normal week or weekend with your schedule?

Breeder Red Flags:

- Breeding more than 2 breeds
- No references
- No vet visits
- Nothing in writing
- No waiting list
- Seems to be out for quick money
- No questions for you

Rescue Groups:

Nearly every breed has local or national rescue groups that you can find online at www.akc.org or www.petfinder.com. Dogs are put in rescue groups for a variety of reasons. Rescue groups are a great source for older purebred dogs. Make sure to talk to the foster owners and get to know the dog's personality.

Local Shelters and Humane Societies:

Dogs find themselves in local shelters for a variety of reasons. Carefully screen dogs for temperament and overall health. Adopting a pet usually requires less money up front as compared to purchasing a purebred. Such dogs come already spayed/neutered and vaccinated. Make several visits to the shelter. Get to know the dog on an individual basis.

4. Selecting the Right Puppy

- A good breeder will help match you to the right puppy.
- Look for a well rounded stable puppy.
 - Watch how they all interact with each other
 - Does one seem to be more dominant or aggressive?
 - Does one seem to be shy or aloof?
- When you find one you are interested in take it away from the pack.
 - Roll the puppy over on its back for a minute.
 - Does it show aggression or is it more submissive.
 - Take a sock and see if it shows interest as you drag it around.
 - Is it playful or disinterested in you and the toy?

Brief Medical Exam

Puppy Aptitude Test

“Check Both Ends”

- Is there snotty discharge from its nose? Is there fecal matter caked onto its bottom? Is there black ear material in either ear? Does it have a cleft palate in the roof of its mouth?

Hernia Screen

- Does it have an obvious hernia around his belly button?

Open Fontanelle

- Does it have a soft spot on the top of its head?

Male Exam

- Have both testicles descended?

Skin Check

- Are there fleas? Does he have pimples/zits on his belly? Are there any spots of hair loss? Any flaky skin? Does its skin feel dehydrated?

Overall

- Does it look healthy?

* We recommend taking your puppy home when he reaches 7-9 week old. *

5. Breed Suggestions Based on Lifestyle:

- Good with Children- Beagle, Labrador, Golden Retriever, Bichon Frise, Yorkshire Terrier, Maltese, Pug, West Highland White Terrier, Boston Terrier, Poodles, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Brittany Spaniel, Keeshond, Bulldog, German Shepherd, Bernese mountain dog, Weimaraner
 - Good for Apartments- Brussels Griffon, Cairn Terrier, Welsh Corgi, Cocker Spaniel, Dachshunds, Lhasa Apso, Shih Tzu, Silky Terrier, Chihuahua, Pomeranian, Papillon
 - Less Active- Basset Hounds, Bulldogs, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Pug, Silky Terrier, Bulldog
 - More Active -Weimaraner, Labrador, English Springer Spaniel, Dalmatians, Boxer, Australian Sheepdog, Border Collie, Jack Russell Terrier, Min. Pinscher, Rottweiler, German Shepherd, Australian Shepherd, Havanese, Siberian Husky
 - Less Shedding/Allergy Free- Labradoodle, Goldendoodle, Poodle (Standard, Toy, Miniature) Bichon Frise, Schnauzer, Maltese, Lhasa Apso, Shih Tzu, Yorkshire Terrier, Airedale Terrier, Brussels Griffon, Scottish Terrier, West Highland White Terrier, Bulldog, Rottweiler, Havanese, Weimaraner
6. Conclusion- Remember the best decision is not made in the spur of the moment. You may have to be patient in selecting and finding that special four legged family member.