



Choosing the right puppy

So you've decided to get a new puppy, congratulations!! But you need to be aware that it is a big commitment that you are about to take and one that will last for many years to come. Having a dog as part of your life is a joy, providing they are properly trained and educated and they will be a pleasure for all of the family.

There are many factors to consider when becoming a dog owner; sex, size, moulting, grooming, cost of feeding and pet insurance, veterinary costs, plus arrangements for holidays and to ensure that a dog is not left on its own too long during the day; time available to exercise and most importantly, to give your youngster the education needed to ensure that you have a well behaved, happy relaxed dog that will follow your directions.

- Research the breed of dog, the size and characteristics that you are considering. Bear in mind the temperament and energy levels of your chosen breed. Some breeds have a tendency to develop certain illnesses or are prone to certain medical conditions so be sure to research thoroughly, so you know the questions to ask.
- A nice cross breed can be excellent, healthy and sensible, but size may sometimes be difficult to assess unless both parents are known. A dog generally takes on the size closest to the mother dog's size.
- Spend time talking to and visiting breeders *before* you decide which breeder from which you want to buy a puppy. If you go to see the puppies, try not to become seduced by their cuteness nor should you select one there and then!! – *ALWAYS BUY YOUR PUPPY FROM A REPUTABLE BREEDER THAT SPECIALISES IN ONLY ONE OR TWO BREEDS.*

Considerations:

Ask how many litters they breed each year from the same mother.

Do they own both breeding dogs? It is better if you get to see both parents

Are the parents certificated clear from any inherent problems?

Are the dogs kept in the house or kennelled?

Kennelled dogs could need toilet training.

Are puppies well socialised / toilet training started prior to homing?

Does the breeder provide written advice on how to look after & feed the puppy?

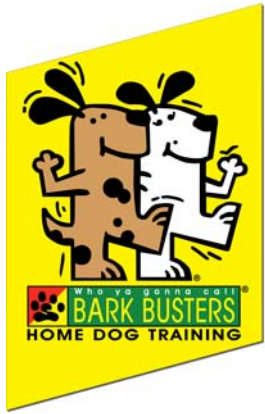
Does the cost include the puppy's first injections?

Try to meet the potential parents – puppies often resemble the personality of one of the two parents.

Look for parent dogs that are not aggressive, nervous, overexcited or over confident, but happy to be stroked or ignored.

Does the breeder care enough about the puppies they breed to ask you about your situation, i.e. garden, fencing, time available at home etc?

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- It is never advisable to take a puppy before it is 8 weeks old – the longer it is with its siblings and mother, the better well-adjusted it will be. A puppy learns from them how to communicate with other dogs and the less behavioural problems it will have.
- Take your time watching the whole litter at play; where possible try to avoid a situation where you only have one puppy to pick from.
- It is not wise to choose the little puppy that's sitting by itself away from the rest of the puppies. It possibly has temperament issues and could be too difficult a task for a first time puppy owner. Bark Busters has effective techniques to help with the training of all types of puppies but it is still wise to try to get the right temperament puppy in the beginning as it will equate to a trouble free adult dog.
- Unless you have the temperament for it, don't choose the pup that comes bounding to you; this could grow into a very confident dog that may want to make his own decisions and not listen to yours! Always look to choose a pup that best reflects your personality.
- The best puppy to pick is the one that's playing happily with the other puppies and not being too rough. If you see one like that, ask the owner if you can pick him up and give him a cuddle. If he likes being picked up and doesn't try to mouth you or wriggle too much, he'll probably grow up to be a nice friendly dog that will give you few problems growing up.
- When you've decided which one you want, try to resist taking it away the same day. Instead leave a toy or blanket with the breeder asking them to place that with your puppy where it sleeps. This will assist with the settling in period as the puppy has something familiar with it.

If you are considering taking home two puppies "so they are company for each other", make sure that you select a male and a female not two of the same sex. If you absolutely want two of the same sex, then two males (providing that you plan to have them de-sexed) are far preferable than two females. Be aware that two puppies are double trouble but if properly managed and trained, they can be great mates.

- Always be mindful of how scary it can be when a puppy is taken away from its mother and siblings, so be prepared for some crying and whimpering. He will need somewhere small, dark and cosy to sleep and if he has the cuddly toy or blanket that reminds him of mother and siblings, the settling in period should not be too difficult.

If you need any assistance with settling your new puppy into its new home or help with his education, Bark Busters have the right programme to assist you.



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