



# Getting a Puppy



## First Steps:

### Think

Having a bouncy, happy, playful puppy is a very enjoyable experience. However it is also a big commitment, demanding in time, money and care. Remember, a puppy will grow into a dog and will be with you for many years to come.

Before you bring home a new puppy, you should ask yourself whether you are the right human for your furry friend! Will a dog or puppy fit in well with your family? Have you or your children got allergies? Do your children know how to 'Be Dog Smart' – see [www.BeDogSmart.ie](http://www.BeDogSmart.ie) for more information. Do you have any other pets? Will they get on with a new dog or puppy?

### ***You will need:***

#### **Time**

Dogs can live to be 13 years of age or older – are you ready for such a big commitment?

They need to be walked, most for at least 30 minutes twice a day.

Dogs need your company and don't enjoy spending time on their own for very long.

Puppies need training, have you time for this?

#### **Money**

Can you afford to look after a dog? Your dog will need dog food, a bed, toys, vaccinations, to be neutered, a collar and lead, grooming, vet checks and possible emergency procedures that could cost over €1,500.

You may want to consider pet insurance which could cost over €200 a year.

#### **Space**

Puppies are small and cuddly but grow bigger every day.

Carefully choose a dog breed according to the space you have in your house and garden.

If you rent your home now and have to move, will your new landlord permit pets?

Are you comfortable with the possibility of having items chewed and dog hair in your home?

## Where to get your puppy:

Why buy a puppy when there are thousands of lovely, unwanted and abandoned dogs in need of homes at dog rescue centres all around Ireland? If you adopt a puppy from Dogs Trust, we are there to offer help and advice for the rest of your dog's life, should you need it. Dogs Trust puppies are fully vaccinated, wormed, microchipped, neutered when old enough and in every adoption pack you will receive; a collar and lead and six weeks pet insurance. But, if you still wish to buy a puppy from a breeder, ask your vet if they know of any reputable ones.

## Take home a happy, healthy puppy:

**Always call a breeder first and try to visit before the puppies are born.** When you see a litter of cute puppies in front of you it's easy to let your emotions take over and forget all the questions you had ready and it can be difficult to say "no" to a puppy which may in reality be unsuitable for you or has come from a puppy farm. It's helpful to write your questions down before calling or visiting a breeder.

Here are our top tips to help you take home a happy and healthy puppy:

1. Visit the breeder at least twice before making the final collection. The breeder should allow you to handle the puppies each time you visit.
2. Make sure you see the puppy interacting with the rest of the litter and their mother.
3. Puppies are not ready to leave their mother before they are 8 weeks old.
4. Check that the puppies have regular access to human contact – ideally the puppies are being raised in a home environment so that they become familiar with everyday sights, smells and sounds. (See below for why socialisation and habituation are so important for young pups\*)
5. Has the puppy been wormed and vaccinated - some breeders will get puppies their first vaccination at 6-8 weeks of age before releasing them to their new owners. The vaccination certificate needs to be stamped and signed by a vet, otherwise it could be fake.
6. Ask if the puppies or their parents have had any health issues
7. Check that the puppy's parents have been tested for any hereditary diseases if relevant to their breed. If no certificates are available go to another breeder. If you need help understanding the results, ask your vet.
8. Check whether the facilities appear clean and the puppies seem alert and healthy. There should be no discharge from their eyes or nose or any sores, bald patches or scabs on the skin. The puppies should be alert and show no obvious signs of illness such as coughing.

9. Ensure all the relevant paperwork is available for inspection when you visit the puppy. This should include a vaccination certificate, a health check report from a vet, a Pedigree or Kennel Club certificate (if a registered breed).
10. All puppies must be microchipped by the age of 12 weeks or when transferring ownership, whichever comes first. As such all puppies must be accompanied with a microchipping certificate and both buyer and seller must complete the transfer of ownership form.
11. Ask the breeder about the characteristics of the breed to ensure they are suitable for your family and lifestyle and why they breed this type of dog?
12. Ask which veterinary practice the puppy's mother is registered with.
13. If possible, request a written agreement that the purchase is subject to a satisfactory examination by your vet within 48 hours of purchase.

Remember, a Pedigree or Kennel Club certificate does not guarantee a perfect puppy - it's up to you to carry out the appropriate checks above. If your puppy appears unwell on collection, do not take him or her. Arrange with the breeder to return another day. If you have any doubts, choose another breeder.

## Red flags to watch out for when buying a puppy:

1. If the breeder asks to meet you away from the house, such as in a car park or at the side of the road, this is a warning sign!
2. The seller asks you which puppy you have come to see. This may be an indication they have different breeds available and the home is potentially just a front.
3. Puppies that are for sale and delivery before they reach 8 weeks of age.
4. Puppies should not have docked tails or cropped ears – (please report to the ISPCA if they do and do not buy the puppy).
5. Advertisements for puppies from breeders that frequently advertise different litters in news paper classifieds, or listed on the internet.
6. Descriptions for puppies may also have been used multiple times. Copy and paste them into Google to see if they have been used on other adverts.
7. A breeder who has multiple different breeds for sale.
8. Reluctance to ask you questions or answer any you have – a reputable breeder will be interested in you and your family to ensure their puppy has a nice life.
9. It is illegal for any dog to be sold without a valid microchipping certificate – do not accept offers of any paperwork being posted at a later date!
10. If in doubt, follow your gut instinct. If you suspect a puppy has come from an unscrupulous breeder, please do not buy the puppy. You may be saving a dog but you will be fuelling this vile trade.

**Newspapers/internet adverts and pet shops - just don't go there!** Many dogs are bred for a quick profit by what is often referred to as a 'puppy farm'. They are raised without care or love and sold to unsuitable households. Many of these puppies are advertised through

newspaper adverts or sold on the internet or at pet stores and Dogs Trust strongly advises you do not buy your puppy from any of these.

**\*Why is Socialisation and Habituation so important for young puppies?**

It is well established that the experience of puppies in their first weeks of life will have lasting effects on their behaviour and health. Early socialisation means letting young puppies get used to other dogs/humans/other animals and to learn proper doggy communication skills so that they can get on happily with other dogs in the future.

Habituation is teaching your puppy that people, other animals, new experiences, objects and situations are nothing to be scared of. Both are imperative to ensuring a well rounded dog. If a puppy is not socialised and habituated properly from a very young age and for the first year of his life, this can lead to serious fear and aggression problems in later life.

For more information about Dogs Trust, to make a donation or help us in our campaigns please call 01 879 1000, write to: Dogs Trust, Ashbourne Road, Finglas, Dublin 11 or visit [www.dogstrust.ie](http://www.dogstrust.ie)