

Owning a Puppy

The Halifax Kennel Club strongly recommends that you acquire a puppy from a reliable breeder. To ensure that only the best dogs are used for breeding, reliable breeders exhibit their dogs in Conformation Shows where they are evaluated for soundness of structure and conformation to breed standards. By carefully breeding show-quality dogs to other show-quality dogs, the health and quality of the breed can be maintained. Not all pedigreed dogs are breeding quality! Breeding non-show-quality dogs increases the incidence of health problems such as painful hip dysplasia, epilepsy, eye problems to name a few. Even though you may just want a pet puppy and not a show dog, we still recommend buying from a reliable breeder as your best chance to get a healthy puppy with a good temperament.

Do NOT buy a puppy from a pet store. Pet stores usually buy from puppy mills, which breed litter after litter for maximum profit regardless of the health of the animals.

Do NOT buy from a newspaper ad, unless the breeder can show that he or she is a member of their local breed club, most of the ancestors in the puppy's pedigree are CKC champions and you verify that the dam and sire are certified as free of hip dysplasia with the OFA - Orthopedic Foundation for Animals. CERF - Canine Eye Registration Foundation - certification is also recommended.

Puppies are adorable and fun. It is fascinating to watch them grow and get to know their unique personalities. And it is very rewarding to nurture their loving, trusting young spirits as the bond between you develops. But *all* puppies, of *all* breeds, require a great amount of work. No matter what breed of puppy you have, you should be prepared for:

Play time – Puppies need to play with you or another dog. Puppy energy and behavior can last two years or more. Adult dogs are much calmer and require less playtime and physical activity-type attention.

House-breaking – This could take just a few weeks or it may take months.

Teething – Puppies lose baby teeth and grow adult teeth just like human children. During that time, they are particularly likely to chew anything they can get hold of.

Socializing – Puppies do not come out of the box knowing human rules or language. Be prepared to teach them what they are and are not allowed to do.

Training – Take your puppy to puppy obedience classes. Most classes are held once a week for 6 to 8 weeks. Your puppy will benefit from continual reinforcement so he doesn't forget the skills he learned in class.

Grooming – Train your puppy to be used to grooming. Handle them: play with their paws, mouths, and ears, turn them on their backs, etc. Brush them, trim their toenails, bathe them, and brush their teeth.

Crates, toys, chews, vet visits – These are the usual expenses of owning a puppy.