

## Choosing a new puppy

It is everyone's dream to get their first puppy, but with over 200 breeds to choose from deciding upon the right breed for your family and needs can be difficult. There's no substitute for doing your home work and investigating the breeds that may suit you. Puppies are fun and exciting but are a lot of really hard work. They can be demanding, messy, noisy, energetic and need a lot of your time. If you're having second thoughts then many rehoming centres will have many adult dogs that will suit you.

Breed books, vets, breeders and other dog owners are a great source of information when it comes to investigating the dog of your dreams. Think about your lifestyle, the time you have for exercising, play, maintenance, the size of your home, garden and of course finances need considering. When choosing a puppy, it is important to find a reputable breeder where the health of their dogs should be checked and you can see the puppies parents. A good breeder will be able to advise if a certain breed is suitable and be knowledgeable about their breed. Always be aware about puppies raised in sheltered surroundings or kennels where various different breeds are for sale.

You must decide on either a pedigree or cross-breed and there are so many breeds to choose from. Pedigrees have been specifically bred for a particular purpose, whether for working, guarding, herding or hunting and considering whether these characteristics would suit your family or if a quieter type might be more appropriate. With a cross breed dog you get a whole mixed package of characteristics and come in all shapes and sizes and what may appear to be a tiny cute puppy could possibly grow a little larger than expected. It is always recommended to insure any new puppy, as unexpected costs can occur at any time and having cover ensures your puppy receives the best possible care when it's needed.

## Preparing for your puppy coming home

Puppies are very inquisitive and explore their world with their mouths so you must begin to prepare your home, well before your puppy arrives home. Prepare your home as if a toddler on four legs was about to visit and anything you can pick up in your hand, then your puppy can carry in their mouth.

Make sure you provide enough interesting robust, teething toys for your puppy. Chewing ensures good healthy teeth and keeps dogs occupied. Providing toys that reward the puppy for chewing the right items such as food filled toys can keep your puppy occupied for hours. The therapeutic action of chewing also alleviates the feeling of anxiety and provides comfort during the periods of loneliness, so be sure to leave a few toys around when left unsupervised.

There are a number of items that you might want to begin collecting before your puppy arrives home. Having everything ready minimises disruption and helps for a good start with your new dog. You must first decide what areas you are going to allow your puppy access. Baby gates can be a great way of keeping them in certain areas where they are then safe and secure. Your list of items should include:

- Bed
- Books
- Toys
- Grooming Equipment
- Lead – Collar

- Identity Discs
- Food (supply of food from the breeder)
- Puppy Training Pads
- Indoor Crate
- Vets telephone number