

Puppy Checklist

Going ahead with a puppy purchase is an amazing but time-consuming process.

When you decide to get a puppy, there are a lot of things to consider in order to get a **healthy, happy** and **well-behaved dog**.

This checklist contains questions that you should ask the breeder and why these questions are important.

Additionally, a responsible breeder should expect from you to answer some questions about your routine, lifestyle, daily schedule, and plans.

BEFORE THE VIEWING

It's important to ask some essential questions on the phone before you visit the breeder.

If breeder sounds annoyed by your questions, doesn't know how to answer them or simply doesn't give the right answers, it indicates that this person may not a reputable breeder.

By asking these important questions on the phone, will save you **time, money, effort** and emotional disappointment as we all know that it's very hard to resist to a puppy when you see it in person and sometimes you might be ruled by your heart and not your head.

- Can I interact with the parents and the litter? ¹
- Where were the puppies born and raised? ²
- Is the puppy ready to come home with me? ³
- Do you provide a purchase contract? ⁴
- How often do you breed your dogs? ⁵
- How old is the mum and how many litters has she had? ⁶
- How do you socialize the puppies? ⁷
- Has the puppy been vaccinated, microchipped, and wormed? ⁸
- What grooming does this breed need? ⁹
- What the puppy is currently fed? ¹⁰

1. The mother needs to be **healthy, friendly, well-socialized** and **take good care of the puppies**. The mother is always a good indication of how the puppies' behaviour will form. Make sure that this is the mother of the puppies by checking her enlarged nipples. The puppies need to be curious, playful, friendly and look healthy (clean nose and coat, clear & bright eyes, no sign of diarrhoea around their bum) too.
2. You should be shown where the mother gave birth and where the puppies have been kept since. The puppies should have been born and raised in a quiet, warm, odourless and clean environment, preferably inside the breeder's house.
3. Puppies are not allowed to leave their mother earlier than 8 weeks of age (2 months old). This is set by law. In some cases, puppies can remain with their mother and siblings for longer as it is beneficial for socialization and toilet training.
4. The breeder must provide a written contract that states both parties' responsibilities, health guarantee and any return policies. A responsible breeder should take the puppy back in case the buyer can't take care of it or if the puppy gets a serious and costly health condition. A good contract should also include the seller's and buyer's contact details, information about the puppy and the parents and agreement statements. The contract should be signed by both parties.
5. A responsible breeder won't breed their female dog more than once a year. In case the breeder owns more female dogs, they need to breed no more than 2 litters per year to have plenty of time in to raising the puppies properly.
6. The mum needs to be older than 1 year old and not older than 8 years old. It is recommended that the mother hasn't had more than 4 litters in her lifetime (including this one), but some breeders could allow more if the mother is doing well during and after the pregnancy and hasn't had any c-sections in the past.
7. A reputable breeder should socialize the puppies from the moment they start moving around until the day the puppy leaves for its new home. The breeder should mention that puppies have got used to household environment (sounds, sights, objects), handling by several different people, other dogs, animals (ideally). Puppies also need to be exposed to different surfaces, water, car rides and have been given opportunities to develop problem solving and coping skills via environmental challenges (brain games, puzzles or even some obstacles in order to learn to use their paws and body). Anything plus all these, would be considered a bonus.
8. Puppies need to be de-wormed from 2 weeks of age and every 2 weeks until they reach 12 weeks old. By law, the puppy needs to be microchipped before it can even be advertised for sale. Ideally, your puppy must have been given the first round of vaccines which can be given from 6 weeks of age.
9. The breeder should inform you about the breed's grooming needs. How much do they need to be groomed, how often, if they shed a lot and any other important requirements about their entire hygienic care.
10. The puppies need to eat solid food by the age of 6 weeks. The food needs to be appropriate for their breed and age, high in nutrients and calories and rich in protein. It also needs to be small sized kibble, so it's easily chewed and swallowed. The breeder should provide a few days food supply when you take the puppy home.