

Before You Buy a Puppy

CHECKLIST

Make an informed choice. Ask better questions. Know what to verify.

A healthier future starts with you.

This checklist will help you evaluate breeders, ask the right questions, recognize red flags, and make an informed decision for you, your family, and the puppy's future.

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH

Learn about the breed, the breeder, and your options. Do this BEFORE you contact the seller.

- ☐ I searched the breeder or business name online.
- ☐ I searched the individual breeder's name and location.
- ☐ I know the name of the person or business that actually bred the puppy.
- ☐ I know whether a broker, distributor, pet store or other third party is involved in the sale.
- ☐ I checked available USDA licensing and inspection information, if applicable.
- ☐ I searched the individual breeder's name and location.
- ☐ I checked the Humane World for Animals Horrible Hundred report.
- ☐ I searched for available state licensing, inspection or enforcement records, where applicable.

Breeder and/or Business Name:_____

Address of Breeder/Business:_____

USDA # of Breeder:_____

2. Visit Where the Puppy Was Raised

Before you pay a deposit or sign a contract

- ☐ The breeder will allow me to visit the location where the puppy was born and raised.
- ☐ I can meet the puppy's mother and see her condition and behavior.
- ☐ I can see where the mother and puppies are housed.
- ☐ I can see the conditions in which other dogs at the property are kept, when applicable.
- ☐ The environment appears clean, safe, and appropriate for the dogs.
- ☐ The puppies appear comfortable interacting with people and have opportunities for appropriate socialization.
- ☐ The breeder is willing to answer my questions and isn't rushing the visit or sale.
- ☐ The breeder isn't insisting that the puppy be exchanged only in a parking lot, roadside location or other location away from where the puppy was raised.

Name of Puppy's Mother:_____

Approximate weight:_____

Name of Puppy's Father:_____

Approximate weight:_____

3. Check Health & Breeding Practices

Before you pay a deposit or sign a contract

- ☐ I know which hereditary health conditions are associated with this breed. (Do this one before you even contact the seller!)
- ☐ The breeder has performed appropriate breed-specific health testing on both parents.
- ☐ I have seen the actual health-testing results, rather than simply being told that the parents were "health tested."
- ☐ I understand the difference between a routine veterinary examination and genetic or breed-specific health screening.
- ☐ I have received the puppy's vaccination, deworming, and veterinary records.
- ☐ I know the age of the puppy's mother.
- ☐ I have asked how many litters the mother has had and how frequently she has been bred.
- ☐ I know how the puppies have been raised and socialized.
- ☐ The puppy will not leave its mother and littermates before an appropriate age.
- ☐ The breeder is willing to discuss health problems that have occurred in the puppy's parents or bloodline.

Breed of Dog:_____

Age of Mother:_____

How many litters has mother had?:_____

What age can puppies leave the breeder?:_____

What hereditary conditions were identified?_____

4. BEFORE you pay or sign ANYTHING!

- ☐ I have received and read the entire sales contract before paying.
- ☐ I understand the breeder's health guarantee, including any limitations or deadlines.
- ☐ I understand what happens if the puppy develops a serious health or hereditary condition.
- ☐ I know what the breeder requires if I am ever unable to keep the dog.
- ☐ The breeder is asking me questions too and appears concerned about whether I can provide an appropriate home.
- ☐ I have been given enough time to research the breeder and have not been pressured to make an immediate decision.
- ☐ I know exactly who I am paying and have a record of the transaction.
- ☐ I have saved copies of the advertisement, contract, health records, communications and other relevant documents.



STOP AND RESEARCH FURTHER

Consider walking away if you cannot identify who bred the puppy, cannot see where the puppy was raised, cannot meet the puppy's mother, cannot verify claimed health testing, receive inconsistent information, or are being pressured to pay quickly.

Walking away from a questionable sale can be difficult when you've already fallen in love with a puppy. **But purchasing that puppy may financially support the very breeding practices you hoped to avoid.**



You are choosing more than a puppy. Your purchase also helps determine which breeding practices the marketplace rewards.