



Make Sure You Are Ready

Ah, the humble dog. A 4 legged fur bearer of unconditional love, affection and companionship. You can almost see your new dog right now . . . running in the sun, chasing Frisbees, doing adorable tricks, puking on the rug at 3:00 a.m., howling a 4:00 a.m. to go outside for a pee, chewing up your Play Station and shedding on everything in sight.

Still want a dog?

Here's a little "pup quiz" that will help determine if you are ready to add one more member to the family. Answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions:

1. Do you like dogs?
2. Does the health of your household allow for a dog? (allergies)
3. Does your building allow dogs?
4. Are you financially secure?
5. Are you OK with picking up dog poop, mopping up dog pee or cleaning up dog vomit?

If you answered "no" to any of these, then you're probably not ready to become a dog owner. That OK though . . . you're still allowed to like them. If you're neighbor has a dog ask if you can go on walks with them. This will be a great chance to see how dogs act and to get to know your neighbors'.

Decide What Breed Best Fits You

The most frequently asked question is: *"What is the right dog for me and my family? What would be the perfect breed?"*

And the answer is; there is no such thing. There is no perfect breed and there is no perfect animal for you and/or your family.

Remember that no matter where you get your dog from, a shelter, a breeder, a pet store, there is always a risk. You are never guaranteed how that pet will turn out. So be prepared for the work and the risk.

This is a lifetime commitment.



The first thing to do in selecting a breed is to get the family together and make a list of the characteristics that you want in a dog. For example:

- Size, how big do you want the dog to be when full grown?
- Do you want to housetrain a puppy or adopt a dog a bit older?
- Do we want a male or a female? In most cases, since you are going to hopefully have the pet altered, it does not matter. The big difference is boys lift their legs and girls don't!
- Coat type: long, short, colour, lots of grooming, little grooming, non-shedding.
- Allergies
- Interactions with children
- Activity level indoors and outdoors (be realistic as to how much exercise your dog needs) how big is our house or yard?
- Trainability
- Attitude towards strangers- loves everyone, suspicious, protective
- Attitude to family members- always wants to be petted, standoffish, independent, one person dog.
- Inherent abilities- retrieving, herding, scent tracking
- Interactions with other dogs or cats