

Important Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Do I have a clear understanding of the temperament and distinctive “characteristics” of the breed in which I am interested?

2. Do I have adequate facilities for this breed – a large enclosed yard for a highly active breed; a high, secure fence for one of the larger breeds; reasonable physical “distance” from neighbors for one of the more vocal breeds (such as hounds and some terriers). If a renter, will your landlord or complex allow you to have a dog? Dogs are pack animals and become very unhappy when forced to live alone outside. This can often result in barking, digging, fence climbing and a variety of other vices that come from lack of attention.

3. Am I aware of the maintenance required for this breed? Frequent brushing for long, heavy coats; stripping and clipping of many terriers; regular ear cleaning of dogs with long or “floppy” ears; professional grooming of some breeds such as poodles, schnauzers, etc.

4. Can I afford the continuous care and feeding of a dog? Things to consider: a good quality commercial dog food, annual vaccinations, rabies boosters, preventative heart worm medicine, unforeseen illness or health problems.

5. Am I aware of some possible physical problems that certain breeds can be susceptible to? Deafness, hip dysplasia, epilepsy, coat or skin sensitivity are a few.

6. Do I plan to train my dog so that it will be a pleasant, well – behaved and socialized companion? Am I willing to make such a commitment in time, effort and money?

7. Is there anyone in my family who does NOT want a dog? In most cases if there is any one family member who is against having a dog the dog will eventually be given up due to disagreements over the money and time that must be spent on the pet. This is heartbreaking for the family and a major trauma for your pet.

8. Do I have, or plan to have, children? If so, does this breed have a reputation for being accepting of young children with a predictable, extremely stable attitude? Is it known to be confident and welcoming with strangers?

9. Do I have plans in the foreseeable future for a major life or career change that would necessitate moving? Would I be willing to take the dog with me unless absolutely impossible?

10. Do I want this dog for my companion and pleasure, or is it possibly to fill some other need? Solely for protection, to babysit another animal, as a gift for someone? Will I be the one individual who will care for and love this dog for the duration of it's life?