

Questions to ask a breeder to ensure they are reputable

The order in which this is presented does not necessarily mean that this is the order in which these questions should be asked nor does it signify the importance of one question over another. This is not meant to be a complete list of questions or considerations, just a starting point to get you thinking.

IMPORTANT ITEMS TO CONFIRM BEFORE COMMITTING

- The breeder should allow you on their property to visit both the puppies and the parents. If you are not welcome to visit they are obviously hiding something.
- Breeders should belong to a non-profit AKC Club that is part of a national organization.
- Communication should not be just text and email. Have a phone interview with the breeder and plan an onsite visit.
- Ask for two references (their veterinarian and previous adopter/s)
- Make sure that they are not willing to release the puppy prior to 8 weeks of age (this is law)
- You should be able to view pictures of the parents and full medical history.
- Do an internet search on the breeder's name for reviews, website details, etc
- Make sure you are getting a puppy for the right reasons that is best not only for you but the other pets in the home. This is a lifetime commitment.

I. Questions about the puppies and parents

A. About the parents & grandparents

1. Temperament of the ancestors
 - a. shyness
 - b. viciousness
 - c. hyperactive
 - d. bite history or aggression
 - e. what are they like on a daily basis?
2. Known hereditary problems (ask for the parent's certification of good health by a veterinarian)
 - a. Hip dysplasia or luxating patella
 - b. Eye problems (glaucoma, juvenile cataracts)
 - c. Thyroid problems
 - d. Elongated pallet (breathing issues)
 - e. others specific to your breed of choice
3. Results of prior breedings (if any)
 - a. How many litters has the mother had (females go into heat every 7 to 8 months meaning they can have a litter every heat cycle). Females should NOT be bred on every heat cycle, no time to recoup their own health to pass onto the next litter. has this dog produced in the past?
 - b. What type of puppies (mentally and physically) has this dog produced in the past?
 - c. Mental and physical soundness of grandparents, aunts/uncles

B. About the puppies

1. Health record
 - a. What shots have been given (with documented proof) by the breeder or a veterinarian
 - b. What shots do they still need
 - c. Have they been wormed (puppies need to be dewormed at least twice - three weeks apart from each deworming)
 - d. What type of food are they eating (they should be on a healthy diet)
2. Environment they were raised in (home vs. outdoor kennel)
3. Describe an average day in the puppy's life at age 7 weeks (puppies should not be removed from the breeder til the age of 8 weeks by law.

4. Anticipated temperament of each puppy in this litter (it is important to know as much as possible about the siblings of your puppy)
5. What type of health guarantee does the breeder give
9. Will the breeder take the dog back or assist you in placing the dog should you ever decide that you cannot keep it?

II. Questions the breeder should ask you

- A. Why do you want this dog?
- B. Have you researched this breed and what do you know about its character traits?
- C. Do you have other pets?
- D. Have you ever owned a dog? One of this breed?
- E. Where will the dog be kept? Indoors or outdoors most of the time?
- F. What hours do you work? Your spouse?
- G. Do you have children? What ages?
- H. Describe a typical week at your house now.
- I. Describe a typical weekend day at your house now.
- J. Project a typical week at your house after you get the puppy.
- K. Project a typical weekend at your house after you get the puppy.
- L. Project a typical day once he is an adult.
- M. Where will the dog go when you go on vacation
- N. What would you do if you could no longer keep this dog
- O. Require a signed contract stating specific terms and agreements of the sale of this puppy.
- P. Will this dog be spayed or neutered?

III. How to evaluate the breeder (not the dogs)

- A. If the breeder does not ask you most of the above questions, maybe you should choose another breeder as they more likely do not care about the long term well-being as much as the money.
- B. Do they seem truly interested in your home environment?
- D. Have they priced the litter based upon their expenses for the litter or upon their honest evaluation of the quality of the puppies?
- E. Are the puppies in a healthy environment?
- F. How are the adults kept? Do they receive adequate attention, socialization, nutrition (what food are they feeding and how often)?
- G. Speak to several breeders, if most breeders are telling you one thing and one does not, either he is ignorant of the fact or he does not care. Neither situation is good. If they cannot give you a satisfactory answer when you directly ask them about this point, choose another breeder to buy your puppy from.
- H. Do you get the feeling that once you walk out the door with the puppy, you are on your own? or do you feel that you could call this breeder for help at any time in the puppy's life?