



CHOOSING A CHIHUAHUA PUPPY

Club Policy

The Chihuahua Club of Hawaii will provide some information on things to consider when getting a pup. This handout is only provided for your information and it is up to the buyer to make every effort to see that the puppy you purchase is healthy. It is truly BUYER BEWARE. A puppy is a living creature, so any mistake can be very costly in vet bills and heartbreak. Please be careful.

Questions to Think About

After reading our handout, "So You Want to Get a Chihuahua?" ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have time for a new pup? Although Chihuahuas are relatively low maintenance, they are companion dogs and love to be with their human family.
- Can I afford a dog? Chihuahuas eat very little. However, can you keep up payments for vet visits, vaccinations, preventative heartworm medications, etc. for 15 + years?
- Do I know how to care for a dog? If you've never owned a dog before, check out the bookstores, pet shops and libraries for books about Chihuahua and dog care. Members of the Club will gladly share their knowledge and experience with you.
- Do I want a pet or do I intend to breed and/or show? Consider finding out about the American Kennel Club (AKC) standard for the Chihuahua. This is a set of guidelines for the Chihuahua's current look. You may not be interested in showing a Chihuahua, but you can get an idea of the Chihuahua's personality, size and shape. If you are looking for a Chihuahua to breed or show be especially careful what you buy. You may not want to purchase a pup younger than 5 months old.
- Am I willing to keep the pup in the house? Chihuahuas are house dogs and meant to live indoors. They can get cold very easily.
- Am I willing to consider neutering or spaying my pet if necessary?

Questions to Ask Your Veterinarian and the Breeder

After careful consideration, you've decided the Chihuahua is the right dog for you. You may want to get names of breeders through referrals or the classified ads in the newspapers. Please ask the breeders a lot of questions about the health of their dogs, including genetic diseases and the dogs' general overall health. Ask the breeder about the pup's parent's and/or grandparent's history of disease or health problems. Ask them questions about the pups that they have sold over the past years. Are those pups still healthy and happy? You may want to ask the breeder for referrals from past puppy buyers. Be sure to listen carefully to what the breeders are saying.

Like every other dog breed, the Chihuahua is not free of genetic diseases and you should ask your veterinarian for more information than we can tell you about here. These are a few things you may want to ask about:

- Luxation of the knees (Patella Luxation) and elbows.
- Epilepsy or seizures from other causes which can be hereditary and have dangerous consequences.
- Collapsed trachea, where the dog has serious trouble breathing. The Chihuahua does sometimes make honking noises, which is normal for them and only lasts a few seconds. A collapsed trachea is a more serious condition than just honking.
- Although not necessarily a genetic condition, one thing you should know is that the Chihuahua pups are very tiny and cannot always eat enough at one time to keep their blood sugar levels normal. So if your pup seems lethargic take it to the vet at once.
- Heart Disease.

Visit the Breeder

When you go to look at the pups, check them out closely to see if they look healthy and clean. All puppies are cute!! Look for clear eyes, clean ears, and clean rear end. Their coat should be soft and healthy looking. They should walk well on the ground. They should not be coughing or have a runny nose. They should be weaned and thriving on puppy food, not mother's milk. They should be friendly, and not really scared. Also, check the pups and adults for the presence of fleas and ticks. This can be a serious health concern. Fleas and ticks can make the pups ill, and there could be other parasite problems. Ask the breeder about a health guarantee or guidelines. The breeder should be able to show you at least one of the parents. Make sure that the parents are healthy, have a good temperament, and look like Chihuahuas should. It is more than likely the puppy will grow to look like and maybe act like one or the other of its parents.

American Kennel Club (AKC) registration documents (papers) Information

AKC registration (papers) can only be obtained for your new puppy if the breeder has applied to the AKC to have the litter registered. The **breeder** is defined as the owner of the mother of the litter. The AKC will then issue individual registration forms for each puppy in the litter. It is this individual registration form that the breeder will give to the buyer of the puppy. The buyer will then be able to 'register' their puppy with the AKC by filling out this individual registration form, and mailing it to the AKC with the required fees. Sometimes a breeder will sell a puppy on "Limited" registration. This means that the puppy will have an individual registration form, and thus can be registered with the AKC, however, the puppy may not be shown in AKC events, and also if this puppy is bred, those pups cannot be registered with the AKC.

So, if the breeder promises you the AKC registration (papers) with the purchase of your new puppy, then the breeder should be able to give you the individual AKC registration at the same time that you buy the pup. However, if the breeder plans to mail it to you after you take the puppy home then we recommend that you ask the breeder for a receipt containing the following information: a. breeder's name, address, etc.; b. AKC registered names and registration numbers of both parents; c. puppy's date of birth; d. amount you paid; e. date of purchase. If you do not receive the AKC registration from the breeder, then you can call, email or write to the AKC. The AKC's website address is: www.akc.org