

# Pure-Bred Puppies and Breeders: Tips on Finding the Right Ones



INTERMOUNTAIN  
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# Pure-Bred Puppies and Breeders



Puppies are adorable. Very few people would dispute that. They're not all alike, though—each breed of dog comes with its own set of challenges in terms of health and behavioral issues.

And of course, dogs have their own unique characteristics apart from their breed. Their specific biology and personalities—as well as the environments they're raised in—will affect how you and they get along too.

With all of this in mind, it's important to choose the right dog from the right breeder. By taking some careful steps, you can save yourself from stressing out while getting a loyal friend. Here are some tips on choosing dogs and breeders.

## Choose the Breed You Want

Before you even contact a breeder, it's a good idea to research dog breeds on your own. By looking up information on different breeds, you'll be better able to

pick a dog that suits your resources, temperament and lifestyle.

Some important details to consider include:

- **What kind of traits do you want in your dog?** For example, do you want to go running and hunting with them or stay indoors and snuggle?
- **How much room will a dog need?** If they're larger, they'll probably do much better in a house with a big backyard than they would in a cramped apartment.
- **What kind of health issues do breeds have?** For instance, do they tend to have problems with their hips (hip dysplasia) or knees (patella)? If so, they might need surgeries or other treatments in the future.
- **Does the known temperament of the breed fit with me?** Labs and Golden Retrievers need A LOT of exercise. Are you willing to put the time in everyday to make sure they get plenty of activity.



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## Meet the Breeder

Before you take a dog from a breeder, you should learn as much about that breeder as you can:

- **Why does he/she breed dogs?** Why did they choose a particular breed? How long did they have that type of breed in their life before deciding to become a breeder. Note: Breeding multiple breeds of dogs is a sign of a “puppy mill”.
- **How much experience do they have with different breeds?** If they’ve moved from one breed to another because of popularity, that could be another sign that they are a “puppy mill” who are just in it for the money.
- Which dog registry do they use and why? Look up information on the registry on your own too.
- **Do they exhibit their dogs or put them in competitions?** If the answer is yes, it could indicate both the good health of their dogs and also their high breeding standards.
- **How do they evaluate the temperaments of the dogs they raise?** Ask the breeder if they have done the roll over test to assert if they are submissive or dominant. Does the breeder pet the puppy and tug on his ears to observe the responses.
- **How old do puppies get before the breeder lets them leave?** Responsible breeders make sure their puppies have been weaned, vaccinated and socialized before giving them to a new owner. Usually 8 ½ weeks is a good time to take a puppy home.
- **Do their puppies come with pedigrees?** If they don’t, ask for one. Pedigrees let you see how breeders plan out a dog’s breeding as well as the history of its lines. Also, make sure they give you a good amount of the food they’ve fed to the puppy and an item they’ll recognize (blanket, toy, etc.). It’s also a good idea to send an item of clothing you have worn for a week or so to the breeder. Your puppy can become familiar with your scent and it will help with the bonding process.

If at all possible, you should visit the breeder in person. If they live too far away for you to drive there, fly out to meet them. Most importantly, never send money until



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you've done your research and received a signed contract or agreement that goes over ownership, spaying or neutering, the return policy, etc.

### Ask the Right Questions

Some good questions to ask breeders include the following:

- ***“What can you tell me about this breed of dog?”*** Good breeders know the breeds they raise thoroughly. They're familiar with health issues, typical lifespans and so on. If they can't give you specific details, be extremely wary.
  - ***“How many adult dogs and litters do you have?”*** There's no right number. However, the fewer dogs they have, the more attention they can give to each puppy (in theory, anyway).
  - ***“Where do your dogs live?”*** Get specific details—where they sleep and eat, how they interact with the breeders, where they play, etc. If you can't see their living area in person, ask for pictures.
  - ***“Do you have pictures of your grown-up dogs?”*** Not only do pictures let you see how well previous breedings
- have gone, they indicate the connection breeders have with their dogs. If a breeder stays in touch with dogs over the course of their lives, that's definitely a good sign.
- ***“Can you provide any references?”*** You should get the names and numbers both of veterinarians and of people who have bought pups from a breeder. Call all of them and listen to what they have to say.
  - ***“What can you tell me about the mom and dad?”*** Get positives and negatives. Also, ask to see the parent dogs. If they're not on-site, have the breeder explain why. If they don't at least have the mother, you could be dealing with a broker, not a breeder.
  - ***“Which vaccinations do your puppies get before they leave?”*** Get specifics. You might also discuss the vaccinations a particular breed will need with your own vet.
  - ***“What's the health guarantee for your puppy?”*** Get a copy and read it carefully before you pay anything. Most health guarantees cover all infections and diseases short-term and congenital conditions long-term.



## Looks Aren't Everything

This can't be stressed enough: No matter how cute they look, you should pick puppies for their long-term compatibility with you. If a breed doesn't fit with your environment, budget or temperament, look for one that will. If you have any questions, any veterinarian at Intermountain Pet Hospital can give you helpful information on different dog breeds.



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