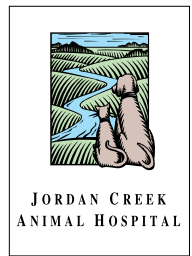




FALL 2015 Gazette

A newsletter for people and their pets



3401 E.P. True Parkway
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

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How to Choose a Reputable Dog Breeder

Every person who purchases a puppy from a breeder hopes they will bring home a well-bred, happy dog that will live a long healthy life. While there are no guarantees, carefully choosing a breeder can improve the chances of getting the right puppy. As a responsible prospective puppy owner, you will need to spend some time researching the breed, and the potential breeders available. The following tips should help you find the right puppy, and a breeder you can work with.

First, know the needs of your family and household, and compare those with the traits of the breeds that interest you. Good breeders can help you decide if the size, activity level and personality traits of their breed fit well with your living situation.

The *American Kennel Club* website maintains national breed club websites that list members of their club. Members of a breed club are more likely to have a strong goal of breeding healthy, well-adjusted puppies. When checking breeders' websites, look for signs that show a commitment to quality, healthy dogs. The number of breeds raised by a breeder may be a clue, as responsible breeders can rarely manage more than one or two breeds at one time.

Breeders must be aware of the health testing recommendations for each breed, and have the time and financial resources to test and screen their animals. Breeders should be able to tell you

what diagnostic tests have been done on the parents and pups, and have the results of those tests available for you to see in writing.



Breeders often raise their puppies in the home versus a kennel, so that they can be carefully monitored and socialized from an early age. In most cases the mom (dam) will be present when you meet the puppies, and sometimes the dad (sire) is present as well. Meeting the dam and siblings can help you assess the health, size and temperaments of their line. Breeders should be willing to have you meet siblings and parents, and meet at their facility. Puppy mills and poor

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How to Choose a Reputable Dog Breeder

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quality breeders are often reluctant to have visitors or show prospective owners the parents and siblings.

Breeders should have a goal to produce happy healthy puppies and to better the breed overall. They should focus on health, temperament and conformation. Most reputable breeders are working with their dogs, showing or choosing breeding dogs that have been successful at show. Though most of us don't need a show dog, breeders who focus on quality, trainability and conformation are showing dedication to their breeding program.

Reputable breeders will also have many questions for you to ensure you are able to provide a good home to their puppy. A breeder who is very eager to sell puppies no questions asked, or who is selling well below average cost for the breed may be mostly interested in profit, and less interested in the welfare of the dogs and the breed. Quality breeders will want to stay in contact, and may want periodic updates on how your puppy is doing. They should be willing and able to answer questions you may have as your puppy matures, and often want the puppy returned to them if for some reason you cannot keep him or her.

In addition, word of mouth can be helpful. Ask for breeder recommendations from someone who has a pet of the same breed you are looking for, providing they felt the breeder was reputable and their dog has a good personality and is in good health.

Doing your homework ahead of purchase, on both the breed and breeders, gives you the best chance of coming home with a happy healthy puppy. A reputable breeder can help you find a puppy that is good match, and a wonderful companion for your family for years to come.

Pick of the Litter!

Most people struggle with picking that perfect puppy from a litter of 8 little fuzz balls running around on the floor. They all are so cute and at first glance, difficult to tell apart. Even behaviorists agree that there is no sure-fire method for selecting the perfect pup but we will give you some techniques used by our staff when picking a puppy from a litter.

General Considerations

The best age to bring a puppy home is 8 - 9 weeks which allows the pup some socialization experience with siblings.

It is probably best to initially evaluate a litter of puppies without your children along. They will have their heart set on a puppy regardless of its condition, personality or health. Once you decide the probability of purchase or adoption is likely, then revisit with your children to see how the puppies interact with them.

Be patient. It may take some research and several trips before you find the right situation. Remember, this is a decision you will live with for many years. Make sure it feels right.

Check out the article on the next page for tips on how to pick your new puppy!

Health Considerations

- Don't adopt a puppy that appears ill – it is more likely to be sick later as well.
- It is understandable to feel sorry for the runt but there could be underlying health issues.
- Look for eye or nose discharge, under or overbite (normal in some breeds), and poor hair coat.
- Do the puppies feel well fed or under weight?
- Are the puppies active and playful or do they seem lethargic?
- If possible, observe where the puppies are kept and see if their bowel movements look formed and normal.
- Ask about the puppies' parents and meet them if possible.
- Observe parents' behavior for guarding, obedience, and hyperactivity.
- Personality is partially inherited. Would you want to own the parent dog?
- Ask about medical history for parents—allergies, chronic ear or skin infections, hip dysplasia.



This year we had the opportunity to host four sessions of puppy preschool classes. Each four week session took place in our lobby after hours where the puppies could play and socialize. Puppies and owners learned about "sit", "lie down", and "come"! Potty training and other behavior questions were also discussed. It was great fun to meet so many new puppies and owners, and to watch them grow and learn.

We are already looking forward to next year's puppy preschool classes at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital!

Puppy Personalities Tests

A puppy's basic personality traits are measurable by 8 weeks of age. The tests described below are intended to give a general indication of what personality to expect from the puppy as an adult dog. If possible, test several pups at the same time to get perspective on differences. Try to test the same pup multiple times before adoption.

Find out ahead of time how many puppies are in the litter and bring different colored yarn or ribbon for each puppy long enough to make a temporary collar for each. In addition, bring paper and a pen so you can keep track of each puppy and score his or her individual traits. Write down the test scores for each puppy. Identify each by the color of their collar.

- As you first meet the puppies, place a different colored collar on each pup. Take some time to sit and observe the puppies as a group.
- As they play, are they all strong enough and coordinated enough to hold their own in the group?
- You will begin to notice some puppies appear more dominant and initiate play while others have a tendency to sit back.
- Do any of the puppies immediately come to see you or do they seem shy, fearful, or indifferent?
- When picked up, are they excited with their tails wagging or do they struggle to get away?
- Do they feel solid and well fed or do they seem thin and undernourished?

Next, take each puppy into a room away from the mother and other puppies.

Intelligence Test:

Intelligence is measured by duration of eye focus, explorative sniffing and tendency to explore.

Activity Test:

Observe the puppy first with the litter and then by itself, looking for general activity level.

If he is constantly in motion, score him "Active". *These puppies grab your attention, but can later tax your patience.*

If he is consistently lethargic (unless he just ate), score him "Slow".

If he is interested and moves to explore or play, then rests, score him "Balanced".

Following Test: Carry the puppy to the center of the room. Put him down facing you and walk away. Watch to see if the puppy follows you without encouragement.

If he ignores you or wanders away, score him "Independent".

If he cowers or hides or follows hesitantly, score him "Shy". *This puppy will definitely benefit from "puppy classes."*

If he chases you and tries to play bite your foot, score him "Dominant".

If he follows you with tail up and wagging, score him "Balanced".

If the puppy does either of the first two choices initially, then call in a happy voice, clap and slap the floor to try to get him to come. If the puppy will still not come and be friendly, do not adopt.

Retrieving Test:

Take a small ball or improvise with tin foil. Bounce it in front of the puppy, then roll it away. Observe the puppy's face closely without distracting him.

If he ignores the ball totally, score him "Low Retrieving Potential".

If he watches the ball with interest,

but doesn't follow, score him "Fair Retrieving Potential".

If he starts out after the ball at all, and especially if he follows or touches the ball, score him "Good Retrieving Potential".

If he brings the ball back to you, score him "Born Retriever".

Remember, some breeds naturally retrieve better than others but the puppy should at least show interest in what you are doing.

Dominance Test:

This test is always performed last and only if you have developed a rapport with the puppy and he feels very comfortable with you. In a neutral setting, gently roll the puppy onto its back and hold him "chest up" for about 15 seconds. Talk softly and act calm and neutral. Observe for struggling.

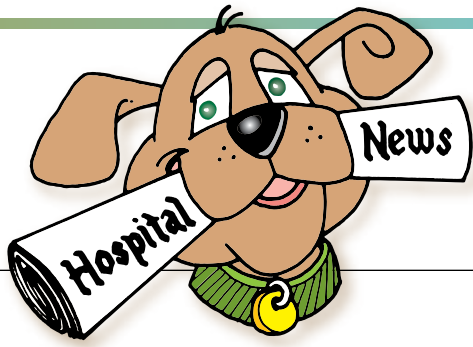
If he struggles constantly, play growls or bites, score him "Dominant".

If he acts scared, rolls eyes, whines or leaks urine, score him "Shy". *It's best not to coddle (reward). Don't punish harshly. Act happy.*

If he struggles some, then relaxes and lays quietly, score him "Balanced".

Remember, these tests are subjective and are only a tool to aid in your decision. Your "gut feeling" should also play an important role in your choice.

Even if you decide to adopt a puppy from a shelter, some of these personality tests may be helpful. In the end it usually is not the size, color, shape, shedding or length of hair that bonds you to the puppy. It is all about the personality. More dogs are relinquished for personality issues than any other reason.



Continuing Education Update

Four doctors and two staff members recently spent four days in Kansas City at the Central States Veterinary Conference (CVC). **Dr. Dan Whitney, Dr. Anne Kueter, Dr. Leah Moore,** and **Dr. Cody Mingus** along with registered veterinary technicians **Mistee** and **Lynn** attended the conference this year. The group spent the days learning new treatments, techniques, and information to keep their skills sharp and enhance their knowledge base to help bring the best quality of care to Jordan Creek Animal Hospital.

CVC is held every year in August or

September. The conference is one of the largest in the Midwest, with a combination of over 3,000 veterinarians, technicians and veterinary staff attending. Lectures focus on the latest developments in internal medicine, surgery, dentistry, dermatology, behavior, ophthalmology, practice management, and much more. Separate programs are available geared specifically for technicians to allow them to focus on their roles as caregivers.

Although it means time away from the hospital, we feel it is very important to attend continuing education seminars. Each time we return, we

feel we have gained valuable knowledge that we can put to good use caring for our patients.

Monthly Meetings

The doctors and staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital think that monthly employee meetings are essential to promoting communication and educational opportunities. Because of this, we will be closed from 1:30-2:30 PM on the following Wednesdays: **October 21, November 18, December 16.**

MEET THE STAFF/our editors for this issue of Pet Gazette



Dr. Dan Whitney was born and raised in West Okoboji, Iowa and received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Iowa State University in 1979. Prior to building Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in 1991, he worked for 12 years at a multi-doctor veterinary practice in Barrington, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Dr. Whitney is very involved in the veterinary community and recently served as President of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association (IVMA).

Dr. Whitney's family include his wife Lorraine, a cat named Yogi and his children Lauren and her cat Lola, Daniel, his wife Danielle and grand dog Freddy. In addition to spending time with his family, Dr. Whitney enjoys photography and gardening.



Lynn Reece, RVT, has worked for Jordan Creek Animal Hospital for over four years and has worn many different hats. She has worked as a Kennel Attendant, Kennel Receptionist, and now as a Registered Veterinary Technician. She graduated from Des Moines Area Community College in 2014. Lynn has one Doberman, Frank, who is four years old and a Papillon, Kelli, who is 9 months old. She also has one cat named Nicholas, four years old, that she adopted when he was 5 days old. Lynn enjoys showing her two pups in events around the nation!