

Responsibilities of a Puppy Buyer ©

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Good dog breeders are always concerned about the homes that their puppies will be going to. Any concerned dog breeder should be responsible for all of their puppies for the rest of their lives. They would like to be certain that their puppies will be well cared for in their new home, and that the new owners will provide everything that is needed for a healthy, happy puppy.

While it is easy to say that you will do certain things for a puppy, buyers need to realize that when they buy a puppy it will mean being a responsible dog owner for the entire life of the dog. All puppies will grow older and older dogs have problems that need to be dealt with. If you can't make that commitment for 14 years or more, you might need to think about getting something other than a dog.

Before you buy a puppy, you need to spend time with the breeder to learn all the things that a puppy will require in order to live a long, healthy life. That should include the following things:

1. Check out the breeder and health history of both parents before you buy a puppy. Not all breeders are alike. It is up to the buyer to check out the breeder's reputation before you buy a dog from them. You should also ask the breeder about any health issues and certifications on both parents of the puppy you are interested in buying. It's the quality of the individual animal, not its color or size, which should reflect purchase cost.
2. Calling or writing the breeder with updates on the puppy. Who you buy your puppy from is very important because not only are you getting a puppy from them, but it should also give you access to the many years of the breeder's expertise in the breed. Good breeders can often pin point a possible problem and give you a quick solution. This is also very important if you do run into a problem. Make sure that the breeder is willing to keep lines of communication open. This will help you with any problems that may come up. Breeders should be familiar with their lines and typical problems that may arise. This could be anything from a puppy getting car sick to a certain type of food that might be a problem. Good breeders also need that information in order to improve their breeding program as well.
3. Provide regular vet care and grooming. Dogs need a yearly visit to the vet to see how the dog is doing health wise, and to catch any problem early on. Dogs need grooming. Grooming includes nail trimming, bathing, and ear cleaning. The Chinese Shar-Pei puppy should be bathed often enough to be kept clean. The puppy will tolerate this well if they have been taught early that this will be done. They should not be bathed so often as to give them dry skin. Their nails should be rimmed when needed and you should check their ears to see if they need to be cleaned. There are several good products to do this with. If you can't make the commitment to do this on a regular basis, you might want to rethink getting a dog.

The breeder should recommend a vaccination schedule for your puppy, which you should discuss with your veterinarian to determine what is right for this individual dog. You should take into consideration the lifestyle and risk of exposure to disease for your dog. The puppy should have an initial complete physical examination by your veterinarian within 3 days of obtaining the dog including a fecal parasite examination. Some contracts may require that you do this sooner. Your veterinarian can help advise you on preventive health and dental care and parasite control.

4. Provide a fenced in, safe yard to play in. Dogs need a fenced in yard with a good working latch on the gate in order to play safely. All dogs need time to run and play loose in the yard. Fencing must be well maintained so that the dog stays safe. We don't want them to get out only to be run over by a car, or mangled by another dog. It is cruel to chain a dog outside to a post. When a fenced in yard is not possible, walking your dog several times daily, with one good long walk will also provide for its exercise needs. If you can't provide a fenced in yard for safe play, or commit to walk the dog on a leash daily, then don't get a dog.
5. Provide a good quality food. Not all dog foods are alike. Breeders should recommend a good quality dog food that will provide the proper nutrition so that your dog can live a good healthy life. Good dog owners do not buy the cheapest dog food just to save money.

6. Keep the dog at a good healthy weight. A dog that is over weight is at risk just the same as a person that is overweight. Extra weight is hard on a dog's joints and bones. A dog that is underweight might not be getting the nutrition that it needs to maintain a healthy life.
7. Good owners make sure that their dogs are well trained. This can be accomplished in many ways. Classes such as puppy kindergarten, obedience classes, or agility classes are excellent avenues to train your puppy. Every puppy needs to be socialized and these training classes give the puppy an opportunity to be socialized and to learn something new as well.
8. Socializes their dog from puppy age. Puppies need lots of different experiences when they are young to be a well-adjusted dog. They need to go to all different kinds of places, and meet all kinds of people so that they won't be frightened of new things when they are older. They need to be taken to pet friendly stores, for walks, and out to the parks etc. so they can have a variety of experiences from early on. They need to meet children so that they get used to being around young children. They also need to experience lots of different kinds of noises. Exposing a puppy to a variety of different kinds of noises and sounds while they are young, usually will mean that they won't be startled by new things as they get older. If a dog is taken on short car rides when they are young, they will love riding in the car when they get older. They will love to get in the car to go to dog classes, the vet etc. ***Warning: Shar-Pei are not very heat tolerant, so caution should be used in the summer months.*** Never leave an animal alone in a vehicle, since even with the windows open, a parked car, truck or van can quickly become a furnace. When traveling, carry fresh, cold water for your pet. On a 90 degree day, temps in a car can top 160 degrees faster than you can walk around the block. Caution should be used in extremely cold temperatures as well.
9. Spay or neuter if sold on a spay/neuter contract. Reputable Chinese Shar-Pei breeders often choose to sell some puppies in each litter with the stipulation that this animal be spayed or neutered at the appropriate age. Spaying or neutering your pet provides many practical benefits as well as preventing animal overpopulation: your pet will be more content and far less likely to roam, bite, fight, or mark territory. Spayed females will not have heat cycles to worry about. Reputable breeders are most concerned with placing each puppy in an excellent home as a loving companion and house pet.
10. Provide for the welfare of the dog for their entire life. Although good breeders will take their dogs back should you not be able to keep the dog any longer; you need to be aware that this is very traumatic for the dog. Shar-Pei are very loyal to their owners. They trust their owners implicitly. If you can't live up to your dog's expectations of you for 14 years or so, then you really don't need a dog at all. This means that the dog will go with you if you move or have children. When the children are no longer around the dog will still be depending on your care. This is a commitment for the life of the dog.

It is very easy to say you will do these things today, but you really need to think about whether you can make that commitment for the entire life of the dog. If you do make that commitment, I think that you will have a long time loving companion that you can enjoy for many years. Anything less than this is really not fair to a dog.