

How to Buy a Healthy & Happy Chihuahua Puppy

Chihuahua puppies are very popular. Because of their popularity many people are breeding them. You should avoid buying a Chihuahua puppy from just any old breeder or you might end up with a Chihuahua puppy with severe health or temperament problems. Let me show you how to choose a responsible Chihuahua puppy breeder who breeds healthy and temperamentally sound Chihuahua puppies. First a quick introduction on why choosing a responsible Chihuahua breeder is a must: Purebred dog breeds have many genetic health problems. For example, luxating patella is a genetic health problem in Chihuahuas - this is where the kneecap moves out of its normal position. By choosing a reputable and responsible breeder you increase the chances of getting a healthy and temperamentally sound Chihuahua puppy, because the breeder takes a number of steps to increase the chances that she will breed healthy Chihuahuas. What largely determines whether you get a healthy and temperamentally sound Chihuahua puppy is: a) The puppies parents (genetics) b) The first 8 - 12 weeks of your Chihuahua puppies life with the breeder. You should only buy your Chihuahua puppy from a responsible breeder (we'll talk about responsible breeders in a moment.) First, let's talk about irresponsible breeders. Puppy mills are irresponsible breeders who mass produce litters of puppies, be it Chihuahua puppies or any other breed. The conditions of puppy mills is often filthy and inhumane. This mass production leads to sick, genetically unhealthy puppies who have not been socialized and are likely to develop temperament problems. A small scale puppy mill could be someone who is breeding one litter of Chihuahua puppies after the next in his back yard. A sick Chihuahua could cost you hundreds or even thousands of dollars in Vet bills. What about breeders who offer replacement guarantees? Even the irresponsible breeders generally offer a replacement guarantee. It's because they know that once you get your dog - even if he is sick - you will most likely become emotionally attached to him and want to help him get better - so you won't send him back. Most people will opt to care for the dog and pay the bills to help him get better rather than to send him back where he will most probably be allowed to die. You might think that by purchasing a sick dog and "rescuing" him you're helping the problem. But you're not. You're simply creating demand and encouraging the breeder to breed sick dogs again. You certainly can risk it, buy a Chihuahua puppy from a less than responsible breeder, and fluke it and get a perfectly healthy puppy with a sound temperament. However, the odds of this happening are lower than if you choose a responsible breeder. So how do you know if a breeder is being responsible and breeding healthy and temperamentally sound Chihuahuas? Follow my tips for choosing a responsible breeder below. Tips for choosing a responsible Chihuahua breeder: - You want your Chihuahua to be purebred. Which means the breeder should provide you with AKC registration papers. (AKC papers means both the parents came from parents who were themselves registered with the AKC). Keep in mind that AKC registered means nothing, other than the dog is a purebred. It does not guarantee health or temperament, or anything else. - Responsible breeders do health testing on the parents (before breeding them) to show they are clear of genetic health problems which are common to the breed. The breeder will provide certificates showing the parents have passed these health tests. Parents that pass the health testing and are free from health problems can still produce Chihuahua puppies with health problems, but it is less likely to happen. Ask for both OFA (knees) and CERF (eyes) certificates. - A responsible breeder breeds parents who have excellent temperament. The parents should not be overly aggressive, shy or anti-social. - A responsible breeder breeds parents who conform to the breed standard. The breed standard for Chihuahuas can be read here: <http://www.akc.org/breeds/chihuahua/index.cfm>. - A responsible breeder ensures the adults and puppies live in and are raised in a clean environment. If the kennel is dirty or smelly - run away. Likewise, if the breeder refuses to take you on a tour of the Kennel and pens - run away. - The breeder should only be involved in breeding one or two breeds and should only produce a few litters a year. You're looking for a hobby breeder - but one who follows all the guidelines listed here. - The breeder should be knowledgeable and caring. She should be willing to answer all your questions now, and even a year from now, should you call. You should feel very comfortable with the breeder. If something doesn't feel right choose another breeder. Responsible breeders won't put any pressure on you to purchase or try to rush the sale by telling you it's an urgent sale, or that the puppies will have to be put down if they aren't sold. - Responsible breeders spend a considerable amount of money properly caring for the bitch when she is pregnant and raising a healthy litter. A responsible breeder won't sell puppies cheaply. Cheap puppies might cost you less up front, but you may have to spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars on Vet bills after you bring the puppy home because he has genetic health problems or a disease. - An ethical breeder will provide a contract with guarantees which you should closely examine before purchasing. - The litter should have been wormed since two weeks of age by the breeder, and several more times before you pick the puppy up. - The puppies should be vaccinated by a Vet at around 6 weeks of age. The Vet will also give them a general health check. A vaccination certificate should be provided for the puppy showing he had all the appropriate vaccinations. - No reputable breeder will let the puppies go until they are at least 8 weeks of age. Some breeders wait until the puppies are at least 12 weeks of age before letting them leave their mother and litter. It is very important that the puppy spends at least the first 8 weeks of his life with the mother and his brothers and sisters. The puppy will learn important lessons about life from being with his mother and brothers and sisters for the first weeks of his life. It is also essential that the Chihuahua puppies have a lot of human interaction in the first weeks of their little life's. - It is important to spend some time with the mother of the puppies. Just like humans, puppies inherit genes from their parents. So you can tell a lot about how the puppies will turn out by examining the parents. Ask to see the mother (the dam) of the puppies (usually the sire, father, of the puppies won't be there because responsible breeders will select the best suited sire who may be owned by somebody else.) The mother should have an excellent temperament when she is away from the puppies (she will be over-protective when she is with them). If the breeder is unwilling to let you see the mother (and the father too, if he is there) then you have to wonder why, and you should probably avoid the breeder. - A responsible breeder will interview you. She will ask you a lot of questions about where and how you live. Don't be put off by this. A responsible breeder cares about her puppies and wants them to go to a good home. - Often, responsible breeders have long waiting lists of people wanting to buy one of their next litters. (If a breeder ever says to you "i always have puppies available" you should be very cautious). Choosing a puppy from the litter: Follow the old rule, and choose the most outgoing puppy in

the litter. The puppy should be outgoing and playful. He should not display any shyness or aggression. Avoid puppies that are lethargic or overly wary of you (keep in mind though he may of just woken up from a nap!). Start shopping for a puppy at 6 weeks. But you will have to wait until at least 8 weeks to take the puppy home. How to choose a health puppy: - Eyes should be shiny and bright with no discharge. - Nose should be moist with no discharge. - Gums should be light pink in color and clean. - Teeth should be white. - There should be no coughing or evidence of the puppy vomiting. - The puppies paws and pads should be clean. - The puppies coat should shiny, soft and be clean. - You should be able to feel but no see the ribs, which means the puppy has plenty of body fat. - Puppies should be energetic and playful in between naps. Take your Chihuahua puppy to the vet the day after you get him for a thorough health check up. Although it is unlikely for anything to be wrong if you purchased your Chihuahua from a reputable breeder, it is always best to take find out if he has any health problems right away.

About the Author

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