

## Pet selection consultation questionnaire and resource list

Pets are for life. Finding the best match for your home and family is not a science but there is a lot you can do to improve the chances of finding that perfect pet. While a large part of your pet's behavior will be shaped by your care and training (nurture), there is also a lot that might be genetically programmed or ingrained before you ever get your pet (nature).

The goal of a selection consultation is to help you choose a pet that is suited to your family, and to provide guidance to prepare you for your pet's arrival. If you are interested in a purebred, we ask that you first narrow your selection to a few breeds that appeal to you, since there are literally over 1000 dog breeds (recognized or unrecognized, depending on which registry you favor). Once you decide on these preferences, we can then discuss the pros and cons of each breed for your home.

To get some idea as to the size, shape, color, coat type, and other physical characteristics of each breed, you might want to begin by visiting a dog or cat show and interviewing some of the breeders. There are also numerous websites, some of which are listed below, that will help guide you through the selection process, even helping to prioritize breed traits. In addition, check with the kennel clubs, breed associations, breeder directories, and veterinary organizations in your country, state, or province.

On the internet, you can research the physical characteristics of the breed, but also the history of how, when, and why the breed was originally developed. This can give you excellent insight into the behavioral traits of the breed. However, some information on the web can be weighted for or against the breed depending on the writer's background and perspective. Therefore consider both the information and the source when evaluating the information and work with your veterinarian or a behaviorist to weigh the evidence when it seems conflicting. It is also important to consider health and behavior issues that are commonly seen in the breed when selecting the breed and lineage. See the references below and ask your veterinarian for information.

If you would rather adopt a dog or cat that is in need of a home, consider local humane societies, shelters, or rescue groups. Many of these organizations have excellent web resources both nationally and locally to help you find and select stray, abandoned, and relinquished pets. These organizations usually have a relatively large number of purebred dogs and cats available for adoption (e.g. [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com), [www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org), [www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org), [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)).

Various factors should be considered in the adoption decision, including breed, age at adoption, the differences between males and females, as well as where to obtain the pet and what to look for when choosing the pet. Puppy and kitten assessment tests are not a very good way of predicting adult behavior, especially in puppies less than 4 months and kittens less than 3 months, although pets that already display overly fearful behavior at this age should be a cause for concern. As puppies and kittens mature, testing may become increasingly more accurate. Yet, many behavior problems, even those with a genetic component, may not begin to emerge until sexual maturity (6–9 months) or even behavioral maturity (1.5–3 years). Therefore you might learn a lot more by assessing the behavior of the parents if they happen to be accessible.

Finally there are many changes that can occur from the time you bring a new pet home as the pet develops and matures. Environment experience, socialization, and how you interact with and train your pet are critical influences that interact with the genetics of the pet. During the selection consultation you will get both medical and behavioral advice to get you off to a good start, providing for the needs of your pet, teaching your pet what is desirable, and preventing behaviors that might be undesirable.

Date of consult \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City/town: \_\_\_\_\_ Province/state: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal/zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Indicate all family members in the household, including age and sex: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Indicate any other pets in your household and their age and sex: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Desired pet:  Dog  Cat

Breeds of interest: list up to 5

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4. If you have no specific breeds in mind, list size, traits, and coat color and type that interest you: \_\_\_\_\_

5. For what reasons are you interested in obtaining a pet (choose one or more)?

Companionship \_\_\_\_\_ Guarding/protection \_\_\_\_\_ Show/breeding \_\_\_\_\_ for the kids

Sport/competition – agility / flyball – if yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_

Work – hunting, herding – if yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_

Other – if yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you ever owned a pet previously? Y/N

If yes, describe the pet(s) and when owned: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Special needs:

Does any family member have allergies to pets? Y/N If so, what pets and severity? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are there any special considerations about your family that might need to be considered (e.g., physical disabilities, illness, infirmities)?

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Are there any restrictions on pet ownership in your home or building? Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Household (check one or more that apply)

Describe the type of home you live in:

- Single family detached – indicate approximate size:
- Town home or semidetached – indicate approximate size:
- High-rise/apartment – indicate approximate size:
- Basement flat/room – indicate approximate size:
- Owned  Rental
- Fenced private yard – indicate approximate size:
- Unfenced yard – indicate approximate size:
- No yard  Shared yard
- Nearby park(s)  Nearby dog park
- Busy street  Quiet street  Rural
- Other

9. Daily schedule/home environment

Indicate your basic family schedule, including how long the pet will be left alone at any one time during the average work or school day. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the longest time your pet will need to be left alone? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you intend to house your pet when you are out of the home? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do you plan for your pet to sleep at night? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will you be using a pen or crate confinement/training? Y/N If yes, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Financial (choose one)

- I have significant concerns about the cost of pet ownership as I will need to watch my expenses
- I have mild concerns about the expenses of owning a pet
- I have no concerns about the cost of owning a pet

**Below is a list of financial obligations that responsible pet ownership might entail:**

**a) Regular expenses**

Food, treats, toys, license, cleaning supplies, grooming supplies, grooming, day care, dog walker

Healthcare; regular veterinary examination – vaccines, fecal, laboratory screening tests, parasite protection, dentistry, insurance, geriatric care, laboratory tests

**b) One-time or infrequent**

Purchasing pet, bowls, leash, collar, identification (e.g., microchip, name tag), cage

Healthcare: spay/castrate, puppy/kitten class, adult obedience

**c) Occasional recurrent expenses**

Boarding, medical care for sickness, illness, emergency

## Pet selection references

### Examples of useful internet sites:

akc.org, ckc.ca, www.thekennelclub.org.uk, avma.org, ovma.org, cfainc.org, www.cca-afc.com, dogs-in-canada.com, www.ankc.org.au, dogbreeds.net, www.dogadvisorycouncil.com/puppy

### Breed catalogs (see [dogwise.com](http://dogwise.com), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com))

There are numerous publications in this category. Here are a few suggestions;

Fogle B. Eyewitness companions: cats. New York: Dorling Kindersley; 2006.

Fogle B. Eyewitness companions: dogs. New York: Dorling Kindersley; 2006.

Iams cat breed guide: <http://www.iams.com/cat-breeds/breedguideindex.aspx>.

Iams dog breed guide: <http://www.iams.com/dog-breeds/breedguideindex.aspx>.

Morris D. Dogs: the ultimate dictionary of 1000 breeds. London: Trafalgar Square; 2008.

### Other resources

Ackerman L. The contented canine: pet parenting for dog owners. New York: ASJA Press; 2001.

Ackerman L. The genetic connection: a guide to health problems in purebred dogs, 2nd ed. Lakewood, CO: AAHA Press; 2011.

Alterton D. The cat selector, how to choose the right cat for you. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's; 2011.

Alderton D. The dog selector, how to choose the right dog for you. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's; 2010.

Benjamin CL. The chosen puppy: how to select and raise a great puppy from an animal shelter. New York: Howell Book House; 1990.

Coren S. Why we love the dogs we do: how to find the dog that matches your personality. Richmond, Ontario: Firefly Books; 2000.

Fogel B, White PH. New dog: choosing wisely and insuring happily ever after. Richmond, Ontario: Firefly Books; 2008.

Hart BL, Hart LA. The perfect puppy. New York: WH Freeman; 1988.

Kilcommons B, Wilson S. Paws to consider. Choosing the right dog for you and your family. New York: Warner Books; 1999.

Lowell M. Your purebred kitten – a buyer's guide. New York: Henry Holt; 1995.

Peterson C. Please oh please can we get a dog? Parents' guide to dog ownership. New York: Howell Book House; 2004.

Sternberg S. Successful dog adoption. New York: Howell Book House; 2003.

### Some breed selector tools on the internet

Organization	Web site
5-Star Dog	<a href="http://www.5stardog.com/dog-breed-selector.aspx">http://www.5stardog.com/dog-breed-selector.aspx</a>
Animal Planet: cats	<a href="http://animal.discovery.com/breedselector/catselectorindex.do">http://animal.discovery.com/breedselector/catselectorindex.do</a>
Animal Planet: dogs	<a href="http://animal.discovery.com/breedselector/dogselectorindex.do">http://animal.discovery.com/breedselector/dogselectorindex.do</a>
Breeder Retriever	<a href="http://www.breederretriever.com/breedselector.php">http://www.breederretriever.com/breedselector.php</a>
Dog Breed Info	<a href="http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/search.htm">http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/search.htm</a>
Dog Time Matchup	<a href="http://dogtime.com/matchup/start">http://dogtime.com/matchup/start</a>
Eukanuba Dog Breed match	<a href="http://www.eukanuba.com/en-US/dog-breed-selector.aspx">http://www.eukanuba.com/en-US/dog-breed-selector.aspx</a>
Good Housekeeping	<a href="http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/family/pets/dog-breed-quiz">http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/family/pets/dog-breed-quiz</a>
Pedigree breed selection	<a href="http://www.pedigree.com.au/select/">http://www.pedigree.com.au/select/</a>
Pet Care Information and Advisory Service	<a href="http://www.petnet.com.au/selectapet/choose-a-pet">http://www.petnet.com.au/selectapet/choose-a-pet</a>
Puppyfinder	<a href="http://www.puppyfinder.com/breedselector.php">http://www.puppyfinder.com/breedselector.php</a>
Purina cat breed selector	<a href="http://www.purina.com/cat/breed-selector/default.aspx">http://www.purina.com/cat/breed-selector/default.aspx</a>
Purina dog breed selector	<a href="http://www.purina.com/dog/breed-selector/default.aspx">http://www.purina.com/dog/breed-selector/default.aspx</a>
Select Smart	<a href="http://www.selectsmart.com/DOG/">http://www.selectsmart.com/DOG/</a>