

## What kind of dog?

As you know, dogs come in a variety of sizes and breeds therefore breeds will vary not only in appearance but also in temperament and levels of activity. Even within the same breed, each dog is an individual. When choosing a puppy or dog, make sure it is the right size for your house and garden and that his/her characteristics match your lifestyle. There is no point in getting a working dog like a collie for example if you live in a small apartment.



## Where do I get a dog?

Considering thousands of unwanted dogs in Ireland are put to sleep in pounds every year, why not consider rescuing a dog from your local dog pound or SPCA or visit the ISPCA National Animal Centre between 11:30am and 4pm 7 days per week or alternatively log onto the website [www.ispca.ie](http://www.ispca.ie) to see dogs and puppies currently looking for good homes.

If you want a pure-bred dog or puppy, only buy from a reputable breeder who will allow you to see the premises and the puppy's parents. Beware that inbreeding can result in physical and behavioural problems. Mongrels tend to generally be healthier and can make excellent pets.

## Nutrition

There are many varieties of commercially manufactured dog food available. Complete dry nuggets are generally a good choice. Be aware that a dog's dietary needs will depend on breed, age, size, condition, and level of exercise. Ensure clean, fresh drinking water is available for your dog/puppy at all times.

## Exercise

It is essential for a dog's well being to receive sufficient physical and mental stimulation. Not only does exercise fulfill a dog's desire to stay fit, it also allows him to use up his energy. Otherwise, excess energy may be channeled into unwanted behaviour. Ideally dogs should be walked at least twice a day. Periods of freedom off the lead to run and play are also beneficial. A few toys will make play with your dog enjoyable for both of you plus they'll provide some stimulation when your dog has to remain alone.

## Cruelty, Neglect or Abuse

If you suspect an animal is in danger or being abused, please contact the ISPCA National Animal Cruelty Helpline in confidence on 1890 515 515. Help us prevent cruelty to all animals.



Visit [www.ispca.ie](http://www.ispca.ie) for more information and ways to help.



# RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

ISPCA  
National Animal Centre  
Derryglogher, Keenagh, Co. Longford

Tel: 043 33 25035  
Email: [info@ispca.ie](mailto:info@ispca.ie)  
Web: [www.ispca.ie](http://www.ispca.ie)

## Training

Dogs don't arrive pre-programmed to obey. If we want them to do as we ask, we need to teach them what we want from them, with lots of love, patience and a positive attitude. The most effective way to train a dog is by rewarding it; a behaviour followed by a reward will naturally occur more often. Some dogs will work for a treat, others for praise and cuddles; you need to find out what your dog finds most rewarding. Punishment can be counter-productive, especially when toilet-training a puppy. There are many books available to help you train your pet. If you think your dog has a behavioural problem, talk to your vet or the local SPCA. They might be able to help you or refer you to a pet behaviour specialist.

## Health Care

Your dog must be vaccinated (from about 9 weeks old) against common diseases such as distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, leptospirosis and parainfluenza. It will need an annual booster for continued protection. Regular working – 4 times a year – is also necessary. Coat, teeth, ears, and nails must be accurately inspected.

## Neutering

Unless you plan for your dog to have puppies, it is kinder to have your dog neutered. The gain is twofold: firstly, you won't contribute to the thousands of dogs being euthanized every year in Ireland. Secondly, you will avoid undesirable and stressful breeding-related behaviours. Additionally, research shows health benefits of neutering/spaying in both sexes.

Contrary to popular belief, sterilisation does not affect weight or activity levels.



## Holidays

One of the reasons for many dogs being abandoned is holidays. A responsible owner will plan in advance for a trusted person to look after his/her pets when they are away. Alternatively, there are reputable boarding kennels which take in a fully vaccinated dog for the duration of your holiday. It can be expensive, and you'll need to book well in advance, but these are the only options, unless you can organise to take your pooch with you!. If you plan to go further abroad than the UK with your dog, you can obtain a pet passport but it's a lengthy and costly process (ask your vet for information).

## Poop-scoop

Always carry your poop-scoop or a suitable bag with you and always clean up after your dog. This is your responsibility towards your fellow citizens, and stops dogs (and their owners) getting a bad reputation!

## Dogs and children

Dogs can be wonderful companions for children, teaching them compassion and responsibility. However, never get a dog or any other animal as a top for your child! Animals are sentient creatures with their own needs, whose well being depends on you. By understanding and respecting your dog's needs and dignity, you'll pass an important message to your child.

Dogs can enrich our lives in numerous ways, especially as companions and healers. In return, we must provide them with all the care they deserve. This however requires time and money.

*The minimum standard for the welfare of any animal is summarised by the 5 freedoms\**

- 1) Freedom from hunger and thirst
- 2) Freedom from discomfort
- 3) Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- 4) Freedom to express normal behaviour
- 5) Freedom from fear and distress.

\* from the Farm Animal Welfare counsel (FAWC)UK, 2005



Accordingly, your dog will need:

- **Appropriate food and clean water**
- **Comfortable shelter and bed**
- **Companionship**
- **A secure environment**
- **Space and regular exercise**
- **Vaccination (and annual booster)**
- **Neutering/Spaying**
- **Veterinary care**
- **Regular worming and flea treatment**

In addition, you are required by law to purchase a dog licence for your dog and provide him/her with a collar, leash and identification tag. You should also consider getting your dog micro-chipped.

## Costs and time

Before deciding to get a dog, you must consider all the costs involved, including the ones mentioned. Also, can you spend some time every day playing with and walking your dog? This is essential as dogs are social animals and will become bored and destructive if left alone for long periods of time.