



Puppies Are Not Good Holiday Gifts

[Tuesday, December 03, 2002]

Santa knows better! A puppy may not be the perfect holiday gift. Each year ads bombard us with images of adorable puppies wrapped in red bows waiting under the tree for excited children who will shower them with love and attention. But during the hectic holidays, this may not be reality.

If you are considering giving a puppy this holiday season, please reconsider. Experts give the following reasons for waiting until after the holidays to bring a new dog into your life. Puppies are not something you should decide to get on an impulse. They are a lifetime responsibility that generally live anywhere from eight to 14 years, depending upon the breed.

If you're thinking of giving a puppy to a friend, keep in mind that it's always best for people to pick out their own pets. Adult size, appetite, disposition and amount of grooming required must be carefully considered. Puppies require constant attention. During the holidays, many people are too busy to keep an eye on the new puppy to ensure that it does not get in harms way with holiday decorations, plants, and other hazards that may injure them or make them sick. It is hard to find moments in an already full schedule for training, comforting and loving an insecure pup who needs reassurances in his new surroundings away from his siblings and birth home for the first time. Overexcited children may scare the puppy or neglect it, especially if it chews new presents or has an accident on the rug.

To symbolize the gift of a dog to come, you may want to put a stuffed toy dog in a dog's bed beneath the tree or wrap other dog-related gifts such as AKC's The Complete Dog Book For Kids or The Complete Dog Book and a dog bowl, brush and comb. Once the holidays are over, give the owner-to-be the opportunity to research the breed of dog that best suits their preferences and lifestyle. Then together you can bring the puppy home.

For more information, visit www.akc.org