



## A Little Advice From The Labrador Retriever Club, Inc.

Things you should look for in selecting a puppy:

- Does the puppy appear healthy? A good healthy puppy will have clear, shiny eyes that are free from discharge. Its coat will be glossy with a minimum of flaking skin. It should be alert and playful. How about its littermates and the dam? Look around at others in the litter, all should appear healthy and well fed. It is also wise to consider the cleanliness of the puppy's surroundings. Look around for any fecal matter that may not have been removed yet. Is the stool well-formed or sloppy? A clean environment and robust family of dogs are very good signs!
- How is the mother's temperament? If the sire and dam are present, how do they behave? A surprising amount of behavior is inherited. Also, the puppies' environments have a great deal to do with their personalities. The parents may be one of the best indications of the future temperament of your new puppy.
- Have the parents' hips and elbows been radiographed (X-RAYED)? Hip and elbow dysplasias are potentially crippling abnormalities of joint formation that, unfortunately, do occur in this breed. While there are several factors involved in joint dysplasias, it is well known that these are at least partly inherited. It may take several years for the painful arthritis associated with hip and elbow dysplasia to become apparent, but the joints can be checked by x-ray examination before breeding. Making sure that both parents, and as many of their relatives as possible, are radiographically free of hip and elbow dysplasia will help you to avoid this sad condition.
- Have the parents had their eyes examined? Unfortunately again, some Labradors may have inherited eye defects that could lead to vision loss. Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) is a disease in which blindness will gradually develop. Subtle changes in the appearance of the retina (part of the inside of the eye) can indicate that tendency. Retinal Dysplasia is generally a non-progressive eye disease that causes varying degrees of poor eye-sight, but rarely total blindness. Juvenile Cataracts are spots of abnormal coloration deep within the lens. They generally do not affect vision and are non-progressive. Only veterinarians with special training (Ophthalmologists) and special interests in eye diseases may be able to give an authoritative opinion on the health of the eyes of your puppy's parents.
- If interested, does this puppy have show, field, hunting, or obedience potential? Even with outstanding pedigrees, not every puppy will have the qualities sought after in the show ring, field or obedience ring. If you're not sure, ask other breeders for opinions and advice. Check the pedigrees for the blending of lines that will produce the best possible animal. Members of the LRC will be happy to assist you in these areas if you ask!

Information you should know about the puppy you've selected:

- Ask the breeder for a certificate of vaccination stating what vaccines it has already received and when, and by whom. For adequate protection, puppies need a series of vaccinations. Check with your own veterinarian for advice.
- If the puppy was dewormed, what was the drug used and when was it given. If the puppy was not dewormed, was a fecal exam done? The breeder can answer whether or not the dam or other litters have had problems with worms.
- What type and brand of food, how much, and how often? The breeder will usually recommend a food and feeding program. It is important not to over-feed nor under-feed a growing puppy!
- Heartworm is spread from dog to dog by mosquitoes. The puppy should be placed on heartworm preventative at an early age, and maintained on this medicine each year throughout mosquito season.
- What are the terms of the guarantee (If any)? Have your new puppy examined by your veterinarian as soon as possible after you pick it up to assure its good health! Books are excellent sources of information for new or aspiring Labrador Retriever owners.

Also See:

The [Buying a Puppy](#) section of the AKC's web site for more information.

A few Books that we recommend:

- The [Official Book of the Labrador Retriever](#) by the national club and TFH Publications.
- This Is The Labrador Retriever by Dorothy Howe.
- Training Retrievers To Handle by D. L. & Ann Walters
- The New Complete Labrador Retriever by Helen Warwick.
- The Book of The Labrador Retriever by Anna Katherine Nicholas.
- Training Your Retriever by James Lamb Free.
- Water Dog by Richard Wolters.
- Gun Dog by Richard Wolters.
- The Complete Dog Book by AKC (Howell Book House).
- Mother Knows Best--Training Your Dog The Natural Way by Carol Lea Benjamin.
- How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With by Rutherford & Neil
- Retriever Puppy Training by Loveland & Rutherford