

Know Your Breed

Why is this important?

Pure breeds of dogs were developed for certain tasks: The task they were developed to perform gives us much insight into the personality traits and activity levels we are likely to see in that breed.

For example: Jack Russell Terriers were designed to hunt and kill vermin all day.

Shetland Sheepdogs are a herding breed. Cavalier King Charles Spaniels were bred as companions.

Are these breeds likely to be dominant or submissive? High, medium or low energy? Easy or more challenging to train? Smart for a dog or smarter than a fifth grader?

Each breed has a list of pros and cons associated with it. Whether you list a breed characteristic as a pro or a con may differ depending on what you are looking for in a companion. Do you love a dog that's feisty and on the go all the time or are you happier with a dog that will be content to hang out on the couch with you?

There are many websites available with descriptions of dog breeds on them. A good place to start is www.canismajor.com. Two of the best sources of information about the pros and cons of particular breeds are 1. Your Veterinarian and 2. Individuals involved in purebred rescue. These folks are ready and willing to help you choose the breed that will fit best with your family. Breeders can sometimes be a source of information, but only if they are willing to share the drawbacks of owning a member of their chosen breed. You can also look for the parent group for your breed. For example The Chinese Shar Pei Club of America.

Knowing the breed or mix your pup will grow into is also important as you will have a better idea of what type of coat care to expect and roughly what size your pet may become.

With mixed breeds, veterinarians used to have to guess about a particular pet's lineage. Now, we have a DNA test available called Wisdom Panel MX that allows us to detect major breeds in your pet's family tree with 85% accuracy. This can help your veterinarian formulate a plan for obedience training and socialization or medical care that can vary depending on the breeds involved. The cost for this test differs from vet to vet, but usually runs around \$160.00. See your veterinarian if you are interested in finding out what's in your mix!