

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

We think Chihuahua's are the best dogs in the world but they live for more than 15 years. It might seem like a good idea now, but owning a chi requires real commitment.

- What if you decide to travel?
- Are you going away to study?
- Planning a family?
- Will the dog be lonely, left on its own all day while you work?

All these things need careful consideration before bringing a Chihuahua into your family.



## DON'T BUY THE FIRST CUTE PUPPY YOU SEE

Backyard breeders who sell cheap dogs with hashtags like #puppylove on TradeMe breed primarily for money, not to breed healthy dogs.

Our members have paid less for health-tested champion show dogs from responsible breeders than puppies sold on TradeMe or pet shops who are dead within a year.

Responsible breeders will offer a lifetime rehoming guarantee - if you can no longer care for your dog, for whatever reason, the breeder will take the dog back for rehoming, no questions asked<sup>1</sup>. No pet shop will give you that guarantee.

## THERE IS NO SUCH BREED AS A "TEACUP" OR "DEER HEAD" CHIHUAHUA

These are names coined by unscrupulous puppy farmers to explain away poor breeding, malnourished, underweight and unhealthy dogs.

There are only long coat and smooth coat Chihuahuas and they should weigh between 1.8 and 2.8 kg fully grown.

Any breeder claiming to breed "teacup" or "deer head" Chihuahuas is ignorant of the breed at best, or at worst, planning to rip you off.

## BE PREPARED TO WAIT

Responsible breeders don't breed continuously. They plan litters to preserve the health of their bitches, so you may have to wait for the right

puppy to be conceived, and then another 10 - 12 weeks (sometimes longer) for the puppy to be ready for its new home.

Be wary of anyone claiming, "we always have puppies". The only way that is possible is from breeding their poor dogs too frequently.

Finally, be sure of the age of your puppy. Never accept a dog under 8 weeks old, preferably 10-12 weeks. (It is actually illegal to sell a dog under 8 weeks old.)



## RESPONSIBLE BREEDERS WILL CHECK YOU OUT

Responsible breeders will have a vetting process. They will want to know if you own your own home and may want proof of this (rates notice etc.). The top cause of dogs being re-homed is a renter's new landlord not allowing dogs.

Careful breeders will usually insist puppies be neutered or spayed, to screen out unscrupulous puppy farmers posing as pet owners.

<sup>1</sup> This is not a refund, but a responsible breeder making sure none of their dogs ever end up in a shelter

## INSIST ON A SALES CONTRACT

Under the standard NZKC contract, you must have the dog to a vet within 48 hours of taking delivery of it, which is reassurance for you and the breeder.

Do not fall for the "my word is my bond" line!

If a breeder won't give you a contract, which protects both you and the breeder, be very suspicious. There will be a reason they don't want you to have any legal recourse.

## VISIT THE BREEDER'S HOUSE

Check the cleanliness of the breeder's home.

- Has the puppy been caged during the critical periods of its development making it difficult to socialise?
- Have you seen one or both of the parents?
- What are their temperament and soundness?

If the sire and dam are badly socialized, then it is likely the puppies will be too. You may have your work cut out for you, house training and integrating the puppy into your family.

We would suggest you ask for references except no breeder will give you the name of an unhappy client, so there really isn't much point, but certainly contact our club if you want feedback from our members' experiences.

## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Finally, if you find a puppy and everything about the breeder tells you they are dodgy:

- they won't let you see their house/kennels
- want to deliver the puppy in a public car park, or other public place
- tells you the puppy is ready at 6 weeks
- won't give you a return guarantee,
- pup is flea-ridden or otherwise unhealthy
- won't let you meet the parents
- refuses to provide a contract.

DON'T BUY THE DOG, no matter how much it tears at your heart strings.

We hear constantly from people who have bought dogs from puppy farmers, proudly announcing that they "saved" the dogs, when in fact, by paying for a puppy, they are keeping the puppy farmer in business.

## CONTACT US

### Dominion Chihuahua Club Inc

Founded in 1964, we are the oldest speciality breed club in New Zealand. We hold regular Ribbon Parades, Open and Championship Shows.

We welcome all Chihuahua lovers to our fun family events, and more serious exhibitors wishing to discover the fascinating world of Confirmation Dog Showing.

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# GUIDE TO BUYING A HEALTHY CHIHUAHUA PUPPY

