

Choosing your Puppy

Bulldogs do come in all shapes and sizes, not all puppies will resemble the show winning sire whose photo you may have been shown. The mother of the puppies and the ancestors will have a huge input too!!

The utmost importance is the temperament of the mother and the general attitude of the puppy. Bulldog mums are very protective of their tiny defenceless puppies but by the time the puppies are ready to sell she should be outgoing and friendly towards you. If you aren't shown the mother you should question her temperament. A properly socialised puppy should, after first weighing you up, be approachable and keen to play and be petted by you. At this age if they are not sleeping or eating they are chewing, nipping in play, this is normal and can be quite boisterous, a toy or chew to bite should be offered in place of your hand or feet as this behaviour on skin has to be curbed.

Bulldog puppies are usually sold at 8-9 weeks of age. They should have received their first immunisation, been examined by a veterinarian and been micro chipped. The breeder should offer you a puppy contract on which should be detailed advice on feeding, worming and general problems in the breed. The pedigree (family tree) of the dog and its registration at the Kennel Club should be available for inspection. Characteristics to look for:

- **Wide Open Nostrils**, this will enable better breathing and reduce much of the noisy breathing bulldogs have had press about.
- **A small nose roll or a split one is preferable.** Heavy nose rolls and folds all increase the risk of skin problems as bacteria grows in sweaty folds, big nose rolls look cute but can become infected, they requires daily care as the puppy becomes an adult. However even large nose rolls can reduce as the puppy grows.
- **Watch the bulldog run in the garden.** It should move freely and not be unduly breathless.
- **Ideally the Bulldog should have a mobile tail**, this is not always the case as often they may have tight tails. This may produce problems later in life such as infection as it is difficult to clean under a tight tail. The ideal is a straight tail.
- **Eye problems are quite common in the breed.** Beware of the puppy that blinks a lot or has heavy tear stains at 8-9 weeks although the staining may be aggravated by sweating.
- **The construction of the puppy** should be nicely balanced with a good neck length [for breathing] and a back of moderate length. [Too short can be unhealthy causing vertebrae problems] Bitch puppies if used for breeding can be longer as this gives more room for puppies to be carried.
- **Puppies at 8/9 weeks should be nice and "chunky"** this doesn't mean overly obese, as carrying too much weight as they grow puts undue strain on their joints, heart and breathing. As they approach 5 months of age, they should be showing some shape, active puppies become more muscular and less flabby which will be better for their health. Big framed bulldogs does not mean obese so weight guides are all in proportion to the skeleton of the dog in question, if the mother is large there is a possibility that the puppy will be of good size when full grown.

Depending on why you are buying a dog should decide whether you buy a dog or bitch puppy . If you want to start showing, buy the best possible bitch with as good a pedigree as you can find. Study the bulldog standard and learn what the show ring requires. If you buy a promising dog and he does not turn out you must make another purchase whereas with a bitch you have the chance to breed something better. For a pet, one cannot beat the male bulldog. He will be more impressive to look at as the breed characteristics of males mean their heads are larger and they are extremely faithful loving and companionable.

You need to see its official registration and have the dog signed over to you.

