



Puppy Buyer Beware

Before buying a new puppy you, as the buyer, should **ALWAYS** do your **RESEARCH**.

Research the Breeders, and Research the Breed.

*The Vizsla Society of Ontario offers a List of Breeders; **however**, the Club does not rate, recommend or endorse breeders, their kennels, or their breeding stock included on the list. While the VSO asks breeders to sign an affidavit that they test all breeding stock against known genetic diseases, in particular, hip dysplasia and eye certification, and that they follow generally accepted good breeding management principles, the VSO does not monitor or police breeders to ensure that they do in fact follow these practices. **YOU** as the potential puppy buyer should determine whether or not breeders are following the recommended practices.*

Buying a puppy is a life changing decision for both you and the puppy. You want to make sure you are getting a puppy that was bred and raised in an optimal and ethical manner.

Reputable Vizsla breeders:

- Are aware of and knowledgeable about Vizslas their temperament, issues, faults and possible health problems, and test and certify their breeding stock to ensure they are clear of those problems. These include hip and elbow dysplasia; cardiac issues; eye problems including cataracts, progressive retinal atrophy and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS or dry eye); thyroid issues; von Willebrands (a clotting factor issue); and epilepsy (for which there is currently no test). Please note that this is a thorough list and every breed of dogs and most crossbreeds have the potential for genetic issues. Avoid the Vizsla breeder/seller who says there are no issues in the breed, who say they don't need to test because their dogs do not have issues, or cannot list what problems they should be testing for as Vizsla breeders. Reputable Vizsla breeders test for all known problems in every dog they breed and every dog they breed to.
- Test and ensure that their Vizsla breeding stock is cleared of hip dysplasia at 24 months of age; and should be able to provide proof of certification for both the dam (mother) and the sire (father) from the one of the various testing organizations (American Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), International Canine Genetics (Penn HIP) in the USA, a Veterinary College in Canada, or the British or European equivalent). The breeder should also be able to provide copies of test results for the puppy's grandparents and great-grandparents back through the pedigree of the dogs.
- Ensure that their breeding stock is tested and cleared for other genetic diseases known to affect the Vizsla breed such as elbow dysplasia, thyroid issues, cardiac issues, von Willebrands disease, dry eye, and congenital cataracts and progressive retinal atrophy through OFA and Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF). Breeders should have copies of certification readily available. You can search for both the sire and dam at <https://www.ofa.org/> . Searches can be done by registration number or name of the dog.

- Work to be very knowledgeable about the pedigrees of their own dogs and the dogs they breed to and are willing to provide a copy of or link to the pedigree at <http://www.vizsladatabase.com/>. You can search the pedigrees of Vizslas yourself using the registered name or number of the dogs.
- Will encourage you to meet the dam and the sire (if he is on the premises) and provide copies of their registration certificates.
- Be willing to show you where the puppies are whelped and raised. Since puppies require a great deal of socialization, this should be in an area where the puppies will have lots of human contact and not isolated from regular family life. The whelping area should also be clean, heated and indoors.
- Register the litter with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC), American Kennel Club (AKC), or another country's official registering body for purebred dogs.
- Put your purchase agreement/contract in writing. You should enter into a contract with the breeder that guarantees the dog is a purebred Vizsla, and will be individually registered. The Canadian Kennel Club requires that all breeders register all of their puppies. The American Kennel Club requires that breeders either register the puppies or provide registration certificates so that new owners can do so. The contract should also guarantee that the dog is from sound, healthy stock with all applicable health certifications. The contract should also outline in writing what s/he is prepared to do if you encounter problems or have to give up the dog. Most breeders give you 48 to 72 hours to have your own veterinarian check your puppy and, if necessary, return or exchange the dog. Note that reputable breeders provide help and support for the lifetime of the dog, and require owners to return their dogs if they must be given up at any time during the lifetime of the dog.
- Tattoo or microchip each puppy as a registered, purebred Vizsla. This is also helpful for identification if your dog is lost or stolen since it can be traced back to the breeder.
- Be able to describe the behavior and habits of individual puppies in a litter and keep a record of such behaviours.
- Know the breed standard and have a copy available. Purebred dog registries, in most countries, have official descriptions of the Vizsla's appearance, temperament, movement, and characteristics traits.
- Have a waiting list. In general, reputable breeders do not have puppies available 'on demand'. You should expect to wait for a puppy from a reputable breeder.
- Interview you! They should ask questions about your lifestyle and interests. They should want to know why you want a Vizsla; and try as much as possible to ensure a good match between you and the breed, as well as you and the individual puppy.

Reputable Vizsla breeders will also:

- Require that you sign a Non-Breeding Agreement. This is a good sign of a responsible breeder. A non-breeding agreement can be lifted if your puppy grows up to be acceptable breeding quality.
- Provide information on the appropriate time to neuter your dog based on the best veterinary research available. Please note that these recommendations have changed significantly in the past decade as new research emerges on the impact of neutering pets.

- Provide you with written instructions on the care and feeding of your new Vizsla puppy; and send your puppy home with a small supply of food.
- Provide educational materials on vaccinations, training, neutering and other issues related to your new dog ownership.
- Ask for the name and address of, and provide an introductory letter to your veterinarian describing the breed and some breed characteristics related to health.
- Achieve titles on their own dogs in conformation, field, obedience, tracking, or other performance events. While a titled dog doesn't necessarily mean it is worthy of breeding, Vizsla breeders who are active with their dogs in one or more areas indicates a measure of desire to maintain or improve the breed's conformation, temperament, health and versatility.
- Be members of Vizsla Clubs or associations in their own country or beyond. This indicates their willingness to keep up-to-date on the breed.
- Happily, provide references from other puppy buyers, other dog owners, other breeders or breed club members. Talking to the breeder's previous buyers and other breeders will tell you a lot about the individual with whom you'll be dealing with, if you purchase his/her dog.
- Provide health certification from a licensed or board-certified veterinarian stating the puppy is healthy and provide a schedule for vaccinations.
- Provide follow-up support and assistance after you bring your dog home and will encourage you to call or write if you have questions or problems.
- Will want to hear from you!! From the puppy's first few days of adjustment in its new home, to stories and pictures, achievements, etc. for the life of the dog.

AVOID VIZSLA BREEDERS:

- Who do not provide veterinary health clearances at the point the puppy goes home.
- Who are offended, or are reluctant or refuse to provide proof of health testing when asked.
- Who do not register their dogs, or litters, with a registered purebred dog registry. All reputable breeders register their dogs.
- Who *routinely* practice inbreeding: i.e., mating sister to brother, mother to son, father to daughter.
- Who raise their puppies in isolation from their household. Constant contact with humans is necessary for proper socialization of puppies.
- Who breed Vizslas younger than 24 months and/or bitches older than 9 years.
- Who breed their bitches more than once a year and/or who breed the same bitch to the same dog litter after litter.

- Whose dogs appear nervous, fearful, aggressive, or in poor health.
- Who do not appear interested in you, your plans for the puppy, or what happens to the puppy after it leaves their home.
- Who keep dogs chained outside or locked up in outdoor kennels or in poor housing conditions. Vizslas need a lot of attention and love from humans, they do not thrive in these sorts of situations.
- Who cannot describe in detail the individual characteristics of puppies in the litter and their behaviour and traits.

Recommended Reading

There are some excellent resources available for you to read which talk about buying a new puppy. In particular, for Vizslas, these include:

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals at <https://www.ofa.org/>

ANTECH Imaging Services Penn hip at <http://Pennhip.org/>

The Vizsla Pedigree Database at <http://www.vizsladatabase.com/>

Vizsla Canada’s “Puppy Buyers Guide” at <http://vizslacanada.ca/sites/default/files/Buyers%20Guide%20Vizsla%20Canada.pdf>

The Vizsla Club of America’s “Buyers Guide” at http://www.vcaweb.org/breed/find_a_breeder.shtml

The Vizsla Club of America’s “Building a Responsible Breeding Program” (includes good tips for what to look for in a reputable breeder) at http://www.vcaweb.org/download/building_a_responsible_breeding_program.pdf

Are you interested in what good puppy buyer etiquette is expected of you?

Here is a link to one point of view: Puppy Buyer Etiquette at: <https://rufflyspeaking.wordpress.com/2009/04/26/puppy-buyer-etiquette/>

Developed for the VSO in 2018 by Susan Mulley and the Breeders’ Working Group which was established in June 2017 and disbanded in November 2018