

Potomac Valley Golden Retriever Club is pleased to present a public information and education pamphlet:

ALL THE POOP ON PUPPIES

Selecting a Golden could be a decision you will live for the next 10 to 15 years. Hopefully, the following information will help you make the right decision.

Is the Golden Retriever the right dog for you?

Golden Retrievers are wonderful; however, they are not for everyone. Golden Retrievers are people oriented, which means they are everybody's best friend. They are known for their enthusiastic welcome, and not as a watch dog. Golden Retrievers shed often and a lot. They are an active dog with an oral fixation. So if you want a watchdog, a one man dog, are a fastidious housekeeper, or you do not have the time or energy to devote to a Golden, a Golden is not for you.

Puppy or Adult?

Before you decide that you want a puppy, consider an older dog. Puppies are like babies. They demand a lot of time and attention. An older Golden often comes housebroken, socialized and trained. Contact Golden Retriever Rescue, Education and Training (GRREAT) for information about adopting an adult Golden Retriever. GRREAT can be contacted through their web site <http://www.grreat.org>, by voice mail 703-620-6593. To contact Potomac Valley Golden Retriever Club members who may have puppies available, email our Puppy Referral Representative at puppies@pvgrc.org

Selecting a Breeder:

If you have decided on getting a puppy, you must select a breeder. The increased popularity of Golden Retrievers has led to a number of poorly bred ones. So, selecting a breeder is as important as selecting a puppy. When contacting a breeder, do not be surprised when they ask questions. They

are only making sure their puppies are going to the right homes. You should feel free to ask questions of the breeder.

For example:

- Do they show their dogs at American Kennel Club (AKC) or Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) events?

If yes, in which areas?

- Breed/Conformation
- Obedience Trials
- Rally Trials
- Hunting Tests
- Field Trials
- Tracking
- Other

- What dog clubs do they belong to?

The previous two questions indicate how active and informed the breeder may be.

- Which of the following genetic clearances do they obtain on all breeding stock?

- OFA hip and elbow certifications
- CERF or OFA eye certifications
- SAS heart clearances

They should be able to show you the OFA Certifications, and at least a cardiologist and an ophthalmologist report for the heart and eyes.

In addition, many breeding are now undertaking DNA testing for PRA (eyes) and Ichthyosis (skin).

- Why did they breed these two dogs?

What physical characteristics and personality traits do they expect from this breeding?

The previous two questions give information on how much thought was put into the breeding.

- What do they send home with the puppy?

They should give you:

- Medical records;
- AKC papers;
- Care and training information.

- Do they temperament test their puppies?

For more information, see Rutherford and Neil, "How To Raise A Puppy You Can Live With."

Hereditary Problems:

- Hip Dysplasia

Golden Retrievers are susceptible to a disease called hip dysplasia, which is thought to be inherited. This disease is a malformation of the hip joint. The only way to know for sure if the dog has hip dysplasia is to X-ray and have the X-ray evaluated by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). Both parents should be evaluated to have "Excellent," "Good," or "Fair" hips by OFA.

Having OFA normal parents does not guarantee the pup to be free of hip dysplasia; however, the more OFA normal ancestors in the pedigree, the better the chances are for the puppy to be free of hip dysplasia.

- Elbow Dysplasia

Thankfully not a common occurrence but Golden Retrievers can develop elbow dysplasia, which is thought to be inherited. This disease is a malformation of the elbow. The only way to know for sure if the dog has elbow dysplasia is to X-ray and have the X-ray evaluated by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). Both parents should be evaluated to be normal.

OFA certifications can be verified at www.offa.org.

- Eye Diseases

Inherited eye diseases that may afflict Golden Retrievers include cataracts, pigmentary uveitis and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA), neither of which is detectable in young puppies. All adult dogs and breeding stock should be checked annually by a veterinary ophthalmologist approved by the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists. The veterinary ophthalmologist issues a written report on each dog's eye status. The dog's owner can get the dog's eyes certified, for a year, through the Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF) or through Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA).

- Heart Disease

Subvalvular Aortic Stenosis (SAS) is an obstruction of blood flow from the left ventricle of the heart into the aorta, the primary vessel carrying oxygen-rich blood to the body. The defect may increase in severity until the heart finally fails. Affected dogs may die suddenly with no previous symptoms of heart problem. The defect in SAS causes a turbulence in the blood flow which may be detected by the trained ear, as a heart murmur over the area of the aortic valve. Because this life-threatening problem is inherited, all breeding stock should be examined by a veterinary cardiologist.

For more information on Golden Retriever health issues, please go to www.GRCA.org/health.

Owning a Golden:

When you take your new puppy home, you should have a crate waiting. Crate training makes housebreaking easier, brings security for the puppy, and keeps the puppy out of trouble. Your Golden should have plenty of daily exercise, but should **NEVER** be allowed to run loose. Not only is it unfair to your neighbors, but it is **DANGEROUS** for the dog. While Golden Retrievers can adapt to virtually any living situation, they need considerable daily exercise to maintain physical and mental fitness. Without regular exercise, your Golden may become overactive and difficult to live with. It is also important for your Golden to get regular veterinary care.

Education resources:

<http://www.grca.org/education/resources.html>

For more information on Potomac Valley Golden Retriever Club, our code of ethics, officers, committees, events, puppy referral, a downloadable membership application, and important internet links, including GRREAT, OFA, and CERF, visit us on the internet at <http://www.pvgrc.org>