

**PUGS**.....Some basic breed information, a few facts that you should know about BEFORE you go and buy that new Pug.

**HISTORY:** Thought to be one of the oldest breeds, the Pug originated in China many hundreds of years ago. Those early Pugs looked very different to the Pug of today, but the purpose of the breed as a valued companion to humans, remains unchanged. The breed began arriving in Europe when the trade routes opened, some time in the late 1500's to early 1600's. As these types of dogs were only owned by Chinese royalty, they were probably given as gifts to the traders, to give to members of the European royal families. In the Chinese palaces these dogs had their own servants. Favourites were given high ranking titles!

**TODAY'S PUG:** Is a Toy breed and competes in the Toy group at our shows. He is a much more solid and compact animal when compared to his ancestors. A superb companion for those who find the breeds unique traits endearing, and can live with his special care issues. Enjoying a worldwide surge in popularity has presented the breed with a few problems. This is not the breed for everyone, delightful as Pugs are.

**SIZE:** A solid little dog. The breed standard describes him as "multum in parvo", which translates as a lot in a little package. The Pug should be square in appearance, weighing 6.4 to 8.2kgs (14 – 18lb), many of today's Pugs are a little heavier owing to the size increase in some lines. Many breeders are working to keep size within the standard. While he looks solid, a Pug should not be too fat, this is a killer for such a breed.

**COAT & COLOUR:** Short coated, in various shades of fawn with black mask, ears & toenails; or pure black. The coat is a double coat, especially in the fawns. The Pug has a coat which sheds, -A LOT! The hair has an ability to work its way into carpets, furniture and clothes. He is a house dog, so if all this hair could be a problem for anyone in the family, the Pug is probably not the breed you should get. More so if someone in the family has allergies or is asthmatic.

**TEMPERAMENT:** Pugs are people dogs, they need lots of attention and affection. Most Pugs get on with everyone, have great senses of humour and always ready for a game, even as they get older. Both sexes make excellent pets, the females often more alert than the males. Females can be slightly more independent, the males more inclined to act the part of the clown. This is only a generalisation as each animal has its own personality. Pugs are usually fearless, they have no road sense, will take on big dogs with little thought to their own safety. Pugs are naturally curious about everything that goes on, they want to be involved in everything. His curiosity can pose a risk, most Pugs can't swim and several have drowned; he can dash off across the road, regardless of traffic, some Pugs have even been run over by their owners, trying to get into the car as it is being moved. If you compare the care and safety needs to that of a 2year old child, they are much the same. With a Pug it will remain like this for up to 14 years. The Pug is first and last, a wonderful companion, he needs lots of human company so if your home is one where people are away at work during the day, **DON'T GET A PUG, PLEASE.**

**PUGS & CHILDREN:** Most Pugs love children, the breed is one of the most even tempered that you could find. They will readily join in whatever game is going, but again, his safety has to be considered. Another concern is how children treat dogs. Pugs are very tolerant and parents need to ensure that their children don't take advantage of this, and tease or ill treat the dog. Another concern is in the amount of attention that Pugs need, parents with very young families may not be able to provide a Pug with enough. Pugs are inclined to be underfoot and again, care is needed. Young children racing about can pose a risk to a small puppy. The Pug is an indoor dog, he can't simply be shut outside when things aren't convenient to have him around. Some breeders are reluctant to sell a puppy to people with young families, because of the above issues, not because the breed is unsuited to being with children. If your children are a little older and have been well taught in how to respect and care for animals, they couldn't have a better playmate than a Pug.

**HEALTH PROBLEMS:** Most Pugs are fairly healthy little people, given correct feeding and care, but unfortunately this is a breed that does have its share of health issues. Anyone thinking of buying a Pug needs to be VERY CAREFUL when selecting a breeder. Puppies are not always readily available, this is not always an easy breed to breed, and to find a responsible breeder who has puppies planned, is not easy. You need to be prepared to wait, once you have found a breeder that you are comfortable with and who is willing to sell to you in return. Do not buy from a person who tells you they do not need to health test their breeding stock because their dogs don't have problems. This is simply not true, of any breed of dog. A breeder who can openly discuss the problems that a breed has, and is aware of issues that have presented in their own stock, is being more honest in their dealings.

Eye lid disorders are very common in Pugs in NZ. Potential buyers should ask a breeder if their dogs have been eye tested and have proof of this. Few breeders are eye testing, so you can ask what guarantee they give if the puppy you buy needs corrective surgery. ALL Pugs should be eye tested at between 6 & 12 months of age, we have canine eye specialists in NZ, your own vet will give you details on how to access one of them. This is important as it can save your Pug from painful irritation and possible ulcers or loss of vision if a problem exists and corrective surgery is required.

Hemivertebra is a spinal deformity. A breeder should be able to provide you with copies of certificates to say that their breeding stock has been x-rayed and cleared. Very few breeders also x-ray puppies before they go to new homes.

Luxating Patellae (slipping kneecaps) is another hereditary disorder that is painful and debilitating to a dog. Corrective surgery is expensive and careful management is required. A good vet can do a physical examination to detect the problem, but x-rays are more conclusive. Again, a breeder should be able to provide some form of written evidence or provide you with their own guarantee, also in writing! Some lines of Pugs are more prone to skin problems, including demodectic mite and allergies. Some lines have produced several Pugs with seizure disorders; legge calve perthes has also been found in some NZ Pugs. You can read more about these health issues in a separate information sheet.

Some Pugs can be fairly high maintenance. Nose wrinkles need regular cleaning, the coat should have regular grooming to lessen amount of hair being shed, ears should be checked weekly, toenails trimmed as needed, and eyes watched for any sign of weeping or squinting which could mean an immediate trip to the vet!

Pugs are more likely to get heat stress in summer than most breeds, you need to learn how to avoid this and what to do if it happens. Heat stress can, and does, kill Pugs each summer. Pugs can also get respiratory problems if they get a chill, the double coat does not always dry readily. If a Pug gets wet, it needs to be thoroughly dried, especially in cooler weather. These are more reasons why a Pug is a house dog, not an outside, live in a kennel, dog.

Given the extra care issues that this breed has, a potential owner needs to be aware of what they could be committing to. If you haven't the time or don't think you would be able to manage these things, then the Pug is probably not the breed that you should get.

A well cared for, healthy Pug, should live for 12 to 14 years. Some live even longer, but the average life span seems to be 11 to 13 years.

**GENERAL CARE & FEEDING:** As previously mentioned, Pugs can be fairly high maintenance. The nose wrinkle will need to be cleaned at least once a week. Smear some vaseline in the fold and gentle wipe out with a ball of cotton wool. Some Pugs need more regular cleaning than this. If the cotton wool shows some 'gunk', repeat the exercise until the area is clean.

Watch eyes for any sign of weeping or squinting, it could be minor, but you really need to go to the vet promptly. Pugs are curious and love poking those faces into shrubbery etc, trouble is they don't have a nose as such, so the eyes get unwanted contact with things that can cause injury. Daily application of Visco Tears is beneficial to Puggy eyes.

Grooming a Pug on a regular basis will help with the amount of coat being shed. A good mitt works well

and you can groom daily if you want. At least once a week is recommended, you can check the skin for anything unusual, at the same time. Toenails should be trimmed as needed. Pugs are supposed to have black toenails so care is needed that you don't cut the quick and cause bleeding. Using a sanding drum on a small rotary tool to grind toenails is a much better option than clipping.

A Pug should not have to be bathed very often if he is well groomed. If you do have to bath him, make sure that he is dried thoroughly, especially in winter as he could easily get a chill.

Be careful around water, - Pugs are not renowned for their ability to swim, it is not uncommon for a Pug to drown within a short space of time.

When it comes to toilet training a Pug, one of the biggest mistakes that most people make, is to put the puppy out the door, expecting it will go off and oblige. Pugs don't like to be shut out from their humans, the puppy may well wait at the door then piddle with relief when let back in. You need to make a commitment to go with your puppy, stay there until he has 'been', praise, then allow him back in. That way you at least have the knowledge that he has done what is required and in the proper place. A dog should never be chastised for the lack of foresight by the owner.

Feeding a Pug usually requires some thought. Most Pugs are foodaholics! The last thing you need is to allow a Pug to become overweight. It will certainly have an impact on his health and shorten his lifespan. The flat little faces and shortened airways can be enough of a handicap, without adding excess weight as well. A breeder should provide a comprehensive diet sheet, but not all breeders are particular about feeding decent food. Keep in mind that many Pugs are prone to skin irritation, so the better quality food you feed, the less chance of skin problems. Base your Pugs diet on a good quality brand of dry food. Look for a brand that uses natural preservatives, human grade ingredients, and does not contain by-products, wheat, corn or soy. Recommended brands that Pugs do very well on are ACANA & ORIEN. You can top the dry with whatever you prefer in the way of fresh or cooked meat, cottage cheese, hard boiled egg, some vegies). A very basic guide is 1/4 cup dry food & a good tablespoon of something else per meal. For those who like to feed a more natural diet there are products like K9 Natural and Jimbo's sausages or medallions. The K9 Natural Lamb Feast is very good for Pugs that have allergy problems. Avoid feeding pet roll. They are full of preservatives and made from goodness knows what. Many are too high in fat and soft foods like dog roll are the worst nightmare for your Pugs teeth. If you need to feed a pet roll in an emergency, opt for Butch White Label. If your Pug is too fat it is simply being fed too much. Reduce the amount of food by a small amount and reassess the number of treats your Pug gets each day. Don't just start pounding the pavement with a fat Pug unless you want to hasten its death! Reduce weight then increase exercise if needed. Two or three small meals a day are better for weight loss than just one meal. Even digesting food burns calories. A Pug will also enjoy having a meaty bone to chew on, a couple of times a week. Good for dental health. (Veggie Dent chew bars are also good.) You do need to be careful in that he doesn't get any large pieces off which he could choke on. Pugs can choke very easily, so always be close by when your Pug is eating. If he gulps his food, pour a little warm water over & mix in, it will slow him down.

Most Pugs beg for food without mercy. It is hard not to give in, but it is OK to give treats. Make sure they are dog treats and in very small quantities. e.g. one little schmacko strip can be broken up into about 10 little treats. NEVER give a dog chocolate and don't leave it where a dog could get access. Chocolate is actually toxic to dogs and a big enough quantity could prove fatal for a small dog.

The better you feed and care for your Pug, the healthier he will be, and you should have fewer trips to the vet for minor problems.

**BREEDING:** If you are wanting a dog with a view to breeding, then the Pug is not the best choice of breed for the novice breeder, they often have whelping difficulties & some Pug mums would rather you did the work of raising babies.. Because of the health issues that the breed has, one needs to be committed to doing all the health checks before breeding. Pugs sold as pets should be desexed, without exception, as soon as they are old enough ( 6 to 9 mths). Desexed dogs are usually healthier and live longer. We see too many in need of rescue now, without adding to the problem.