

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEAGLES

A handbook for people considering buying a Beagle



The Beagle Club of Queensland

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ABOUT THE BEAGLE

The Beagle is a breed of dog that belongs to the group of dogs known as the hounds. A hound is a dog that is predominantly used for hunting. The purpose of the Beagle was originally to hunt small game such as Hare or Rabbit. In modern times, the Beagle has become a versatile dog whose work includes services to quarantine, termite detection, companion dog, pet therapy, and use in movies and commercials. However, its most valuable asset in being an ideal family pet is what makes Beagle's one of the most popular and sought after breeds of hound. They are an attractive, relatively low maintenance dog but being a pack dog, require a lot of attention and regular company.

General appearance and purpose

Whilst the height of a Beagle varies across the world, it is generally accepted that a Beagle should be between thirteen inches (33cm) and sixteen inches (40cm) when measured to the Beagle's withers (the top of their shoulders).

There are many different colour variations of the Beagle, from the traditional tricolour (black back blending into tan and white), to Tan and White, Lemon and White, mottles and peds. Regardless of the colour combination, all Beagles will have a white tip on their tail, known as their "Stern or Flag". This has been bred into the breed so that when the Beagle is out in the grass hunting, they have their nose down and their tail in the air, with their white tip being easily seen by their owners.

The Beagle has the characteristic of being a devoted family member that will provide many hours of fun, love and amusement each day.



General health

The Beagle is a breed that is not susceptible to many of the canine characteristics that can be found in other breeds of dogs. They are not prone to hip displacement, back problems, breathing difficulties or other conditions that can be found in other breeds. Generally, the Beagle breed is very sound. Their proportions and size reduce their susceptibility to structural problems. Unfortunately, this, along with their placid nature, may be the reason why some countries use Beagles for experiments and testing of products.

All mammals, including dogs, are equally susceptible to the regular conditions and diseases that mammals can get. Beagles are no exception. There is the same percentage of Beagles with epilepsy, for example, as you will find in any breed of dog or any species of mammal.

History

It is always useful to know about the history of any breed of dog, as this provides valuable insight into the likely nature of the breed.

Beagles have a long and consistent history and, as a result, have a lot of natural instinct. As a breed, Beagles have been in existence for quite some time, although their precise origins are only vaguely known.

Beagle type dogs are described in documents dating from 400BC Greece and 200AD Britain. The Romans are also thought to have transported to England with them small rabbit hunting hounds and bred them with the local hounds. Talbot Hounds were brought to England from France during the



Norman Conquest in 1066 and are considered to be ancestors to the Southern Hound, the Beagle and the Foxhound.

Beagles became popular with the British monarchy in the 1300 and 1400s. Edward II and Henry VII both kept packs of Glove Beagles, so named since they were small enough to fit on a glove.

By the 1400s Beagles existed in Britain, Italy, Greece and France. The word “Beagle” has two possible origins. It either originated from the word “beag” which means small or from the French

word “begle” meaning “useless or of little value”.

By the 1700s two types of hounds existed for hunting rabbits: the Southern Hound and the much quicker North Country Beagle. Since fox hunting was becoming increasingly popular, Beagles were being kept less and less in favour of Foxhounds. Fortunately for the continuing existence of the Beagle, farmers in England, Ireland and Wales continued to keep packs to hunt with.

Traditionally, it was said that the rich man kept a pack of foxhounds and hunted on horseback where the horses could keep up with the foxhounds in pursuit. The poorer man kept packs of Beagles, because they had fewer horses and pursued the packs of Beagles on foot.

In the mid 1800s Reverend Phillip Honeywood established his pack of Beagles in Essex, England, which is thought to be the progenitor of the modern Beagle. He was breeding for hunting skills though, not for looks. A fellow Englishman, Thomas Johnson, was responsible for breeding lines of Beagles that could hunt and look attractive.

THE BEAGLE AS A PET

The Beagle can be considered an ideal pet for homes where there is regular company and attention available. A Beagle will thrive in an environment where there are other companions, whether this is in the form of another Beagle, other dogs or animals, or humans.

A Beagle is an ideal companion dog for people of all ages and abilities. Not only do they suit a family environment, they are a loyal and loving dog for those seeking canine accompaniment. They are well suited as social support for elderly people and for people with disabilities. Beagle owners often find the loyalty and devotion shown by the Beagle being reciprocated by the owner.

Beagles are particularly suited to homes where there are children and are considered by many to be one of the best breeds for young families. Their placid nature and tolerance means it is very unlikely a Beagle will become aggressive towards children. Being a relatively small and tender looking breed of dog, they tend not to intimidate children. The Beagle’s gentle, playful nature soon makes most children comfortable. As the Beagle has the temperament well suited to children, it is also important for children to learn to respect the Beagle’s needs and to value the Beagle as being part of their family. Whilst the Beagle is not a big dog, it is a breed that has stamina and will play with children for as long as the kids can keep up. Quite often it is the children that tire before the Beagle.

Most people who have had Beagles know that their reputation as “the eternal puppy” is well earned. The Beagle remains playful for most of their lives and it is not uncommon to see thirteen or fourteen-year-old Beagles wanting to play with the same enthusiasm they had when they were a

puppy. You need to keep this in mind when considering a Beagle, as they will need companionship and attention their whole lives.

Because the Beagle is a pack dog, it is happiest being with you, regardless of what you are doing. If you are out on a walk, working in the garden, or playing in the back yard, your Beagle will be right there with you. Then, when the work is done, your Beagle will curl up at your feet.

WHEN IT'S TIME TO GET YOUR BEAGLE

Buying a puppy on impulse may only cause financial and personal heartbreak later on. It makes better sense to put some real thought into your canine investment, especially since it is likely that your Beagle will share many years with you.

It is important when looking for a new dog, not to be convinced from the outset that a Beagle is “the dog” for you. Read all you can about the breed and visit as many dog shows as possible as this is where you will meet the breeders who can give you all the details and advice about your chosen breed. Pet Expos occur regularly and Beagle displays are often part of these Expos.

The needs of a Beagle

Before you acquire a Beagle consider what a Beagle requires of you.....

1. Long term commitment to animal ownership (Beagles can live to 15 years and beyond).
2. A secure fence that a Beagle cannot go over, through or under.
3. An owner prepared for the puppy stage? Puppies like to rummage around in gardens, chew whatever they can find, dig holes etc. Puppies are like little toddlers and require patience and tolerance. If you do not want to go through the puppyhood phase you may want to consider an older Beagle.
4. An owner that is prepared for the Beagle to become part of the family, not just a pet. While Beagles live happily outside they need regular interaction with their owners.
5. Company during the day. Are you or another family member home at least part of the day or do you have another dog?



Beagles need the company of their human pack or another canine friend. Left for lengthy periods of time on a regular basis will make for a very unhappy, lonely and very bored Beagle who will soon get up to mischief to relieve that boredom – ie barking, taking clothes off the line, trying to escape – these are but a few avenues of entertainment for a bored Beagle.

6. An owner prepared for the cost. Besides the initial outlay for the purchase of your Beagle it will also be necessary for your Beagle to be desexed, vaccinated every year, be put on heartworm prevention, registered with the local council, be kennelled while you are on holidays and of course may require other veterinary services for unforeseen reasons. This can add up to a substantial cost and can be a strain on a family budget.

Who to buy from

The only reliable place to buy a Beagle puppy is from a reputable breeder whose business is breeding quality Beagles. Reputable breeders will be willing to answer any questions you might have that pertain to the breed and they will make themselves available to you if you call for advice or if you encounter problems after you have made your purchase. To find such kennels contact the controlling body in your state i.e. The Canine Control Council Qld, who will give you a list of registered breeders in your area. In Queensland, The Beagle Club of Queensland is able to provide

information about litters and breeders in Queensland. The Beagle Club of Queensland also has a Puppy Register with details of new litters. Details of the Beagle Club of Queensland can be found on the back cover of this booklet.

You should be wary of purchasing Beagles, or any dog for that matter, from breeders or shops that do not offer pedigree papers. The pedigree paper is proof of obtaining an authentic Beagle. Breeders will often hear of stories where people have thought they bought a Beagle only to find a few months down the track that their Beagle is much larger than expected. There are a number of breeds that are very similar to the Beagle with the exception of height. At a young age the puppies look the same but as they grow older, become much taller than a Beagle. Many Beagle breeders have heard people ask of their Beagles “Is that a miniature Beagle?” or “My Beagle at home is much bigger than those.” Buying a Beagle with pedigree papers, from a registered breeder will ensure you get a “real” Beagle.

Visiting the breeder

The breeder of the litter will be very keen to ensure their puppies are going into a suitable environment to keep the Beagle safe, happy and healthy. They have a good knowledge of the environments that best suit Beagles.

Ask your breeder as many questions as you can think of. Ask questions not only of the particular litter but of the parents and lineage of the puppies and of the breed in general. Ask the breeder what they look for in a good Beagle owner.

Your breeder will also ask you lots of questions about your house, yard, family and work habits. Don't get offended at these questions. The breeder is simply helping to determine for both you and their puppies, whether your home would be suitable for a Beagle.

Once you and your breeder have determined that the Beagle suits your needs, your lifestyle, your environment and your own personality, there will be much more to consider before you make your final purchase.

Visiting the litter

Arrange a time to suit yourself and the breeder to visit the kennel and you will be able to tell in a very short time whether the puppies will make healthy and happy pets.

By the time puppies reach eight weeks of age there have been three major sources of interaction that has influenced them. These are littermates, the mother and the breeder. In fact these three sources of interaction are crucial to a pup's socialisation skills. Basic knowledge about canine socialisation can prepare new puppy owners on how to gauge a pup's social capabilities. Wherever you buy your puppy from it should not be hard to ascertain whether the pup's early socialisation has been adequate or in some way restricted.

Shy or standoffish behaviour can be a sign of poor early socialisation. This is often the case with pups being removed from their littermates too early. It can also be a sign the pups have had little interaction with their carers for the first six to eight weeks of their life. All puppies need a well-balanced introduction to early training and socialisation, but some pups require more socialisation than others.



View the entire litter if possible

When choosing your puppy this one important rule should be adhered to whenever possible. It is very hard to obtain a complete picture of your pup's behaviour if he cannot be viewed interacting with his littermates. Viewing puppies of the same litter together allows you to see which ones are more dominant and pushy or perhaps a little more reserved. At any rate, extremes of this behavioural spectrum will clearly stand out from a very young age and can only be truly gauged when viewing all the pups together.

When you visit a litter of puppies over five weeks old the whole area should erupt into fun and movement as pups come charging out to see you. Puppies should be outgoing and adventurous. If you visit a litter of puppies and they run and hide from you, warning bells should ring immediately.

A healthy puppy will appear clean, plump and lively. Sometimes you will have the advantage of seeing the puppies' dam and perhaps their sire and other relatives. Remember that the mother, having just raised a demanding family, may not be looking her best, but if she is sturdy and friendly her puppies should be too. If you feel that something is lacking in the care or condition of the dogs, it is better to look elsewhere than to buy hastily and regret it afterwards.

Buy a healthy dog with a good disposition, one that has been properly socialised and likes being around people. If you live in a remote area and have access to the Internet your selection can be done via email as photos can be attached for your perusal. Puppies can be flown to their destination without the stress of a long distance road trip and usually suffer no ill effects. The only disadvantage of this is that you do not get to see the interaction between the whole litter.

The different behavioural types can be categorised under the following headings.

The Hyperactive Puppy

The pup frequently noticed first when viewing a litter is the one that continually occupies himself by playing with his littermates, toys, or any potential human playmate. Active puppies, although outgoing and sociable, can be a real handful if their need for activity and interaction is not met. Activities ranging from chewing, digging and barking are the norm for all puppies, but active puppies seem to take these pastimes to excess. This can put a constant strain on the owner's resources for entertaining such a pup and they need very tolerant owners who are willing to put a lot of time into the training and shaping of their behaviour. Those people not in a position to offer the extra attention it needs would stand the real risk of letting the puppy mature into an overexcitable pet, one that would be the cause of much frustration because of his energy and exuberance.

The Shy and Quiet Puppy

This is another pup to stand out from his littermates but this time for completely opposite reasons. Shy and quiet pups are often standoffish with humans and other puppies. One of the most common 'human' interpretations of such a pup's behaviour is that he seems calm and quiet and would probably be a passive and gentle dog to raise. Unfortunately if these pups are left to their own devices during the first twelve weeks of social development this is rarely the case. As they mature they can often appear to be normal around family members and other pets but outside these close family ties they can become fearful and even aggressive especially to strangers both people and animals. However in the long run even the shyest puppy can mature into a confident dog capable of mixing in many and varied social circles if the training process is both fun and positive.

The Dominant Puppy

If you observe a litter of puppies interacting with each other for any period of time, you will be able to spot the one that sees himself or herself as the boss. Some people often interpret this behaviour as nothing more than extra confidence, which is true enough, but confident enough to take on all

comers even the new owners. In choosing a dominant puppy to come home with you as a family pet, owners should always be prepared to put much time and effort into training and socialisation.

Regardless of where you purchase your new puppy, always try to make your selection wisely, not just emotively. A suitable temperament is far more important than physical shape, size or preferred colour. These few brief pointers are only guidelines to help you make a final puppy selection. Above all, enjoy being a major partner in your pup's growing and maturing process.

FEEDING YOUR BEAGLE

A Beagle's love of food is well known! They will eat almost anything and their appetite can seem insatiable and hence that is why we see a lot of "portly" Beagles. Beagles will go to any length to get at food and an unattended tasty morsel left within reach will be gone in no time -so beware!

Adult Beagles over the age of 12 months require 1 meal per day (although you can split the one meal if you would prefer to feed your Beagle twice per day) together with a regular bone or hard chew food, while puppies from 3 months to 12 months will require a morning and evening meal, as well as a small bone or hard chew food to assist with baby teeth. Ensure that you have a sturdy bowl to feed your Beagle and one that he or she doesn't have to chase around while eating. A medium sized metal bowl with rubber base will be suitable.

There are many different brands of high quality dry food available, which provide a complete balanced diet for your Beagle from puppy stage to senior citizen and require no additional supplements. These dry foods are mainly available from your veterinarian or produce store. Follow the recommended quantities for feeding your pet that are displayed on the packaging.

If you do not want to feed your Beagle solely dry food, a combination of half dry food/half wet food is an alternative. Tinned dog food, meat rolls, dog casseroles etc, which are obtainable from the supermarket, are all suitable. Even a small tin of sardines or lean meat cuts mixed in with the dry food will be very welcomed by your Beagle.

Dogs of all descriptions need to eat bones for healthy teeth and gums. Give your Beagle a small brisket bone or dental biscuit at least every second day. A nice bone will also help to keep your beagle occupied while you are out of the house. As a change from a brisket bone you can also feed your beagle raw chicken necks or wings but **NEVER** feed any dog cooked bones as the composition of the bone is changed when cooked and can splinter and seriously injure your pet.

Avoid feeding your Beagle spicy or fatty foods. Chocolate should be avoided at all times, as it is toxic to dogs. If you want to give your Beagle a small reward, there are many commercial products that are available from the supermarket. However, these dog treats should only be used occasionally and as a reward for good behaviour.

Remember that Beagles love their food and will eat even if they don't need it, so just be wary of those sad Beagle eyes begging for more food — do not overfeed your Beagle!!

Plenty of fresh clean water should always be available. Puppies can tend to tip over their water bowl so make certain you have a good sturdy bowl that can't be tipped over. Also while your Beagle is still a puppy make sure that you do not have a bowl that is too deep in case your puppy falls in.

The above dietary advice is a general guide only. If you are having a specific problem feeding your Beagle, you should consult your veterinarian for qualified advice.

CARING FOR YOUR BEAGLE

Being a short coated dog, Beagles do not require as much attention to grooming as other breeds and have a coat that does not produce the characteristic “doggy smell” when they are wet. They do not require regular washing but, with any dog, should be kept clean when necessary.

There are a number of areas of health for consideration with the Beagle. The first is to ensure their ears are cleaned regularly. Being a soft-eared dog, their ear canals can become dirty and can be susceptible to infection if not maintained. A good clean inside and around their ear canal every few days with a cloth will assist in preventing infection. There are a number of ear cleaning products available from your Vet to help keep your Beagle's ears fresh and clean.

You Beagle's coat and nails will need regular attention. A good brush once a week with a suitable brush will remove any old or dead hair from the Beagle's coat. You will be surprised how shiny a Beagle's coat will keep with regular brushing. Nails should be cut with a sharp pair of canine nail clippers once a week. Contact your breeder or Vet if you are unsure how to cut your Beagle's nails correctly. If you get into the habit of brushing the coat and cutting the nails once a week, your Beagle will be much happier, healthier and better looking. They will also love the extra time spent with you while you groom them.

By far the best care you can give your Beagle is just being there. The healthiest Beagle is one that has the love and attention of their family and has plenty of opportunity to play and just be with its family. A neglected Beagle will not only be unhappy but is more likely to display less acceptable behaviour as a result.

Desexing

It is healthy and responsible care for your Beagle if you have them desexed. Their social behaviour will change once they reach puberty if they are not desexed. It is much cleaner for both the Beagle and you if they are desexed. You will not have stray dogs trying to get to your Beagle when she is in season. Illnesses that may arise when older are reduced if desexed. Unwanted pregnancies and puppies, which are usually cross bred pregnancies, are less likely. Councils also give discounts for desexed dogs.

There is mixed literature on whether it is better to allow dogs to reach puberty before desexing. Most Vets and breeders will recommend the dog is desexed when they reach about 6 months.

TRAINING YOU AND YOUR BEAGLE

It is important for you to note the heading of this section – “Training You and Your Beagle”. Most new dog owners expect that it is only the dog that requires training in order for it to behave. In fact, the success of a puppy or older dog in behaviour depends largely on the behaviour of the owner. If an owner decides to return their puppy, explaining to the breeder that the puppy digs up the yard, continually barks, or is just plain naughty, it can usually be attributed to the new owner not making the effort to educate the puppy.

Clarity, consistency and patience are required by the owner when training any dog, including Beagles. Be clear in your commands and what you expect of your Beagle. Ensure you are consistent with your commands and expectations. Inconsistency when training is the leading cause of dogs failing to learn. Finally, patience to allow your Beagle time to learn what is expected and praise when they do the right thing is needed. Some dogs, particularly puppies will require a lot of training before they learn what is expected of them. If it is important that a Beagle learns what you want them to do, then you have to put in the time. They won't teach themselves.

General Training

Puppy preschool is an excellent venue for your dog to develop basic obedience skills and to socialize with other dogs his own age. At this stage, all that is needed is a lead and a soft collar that fits well. Hold onto the lead and at first, let your dog take you where he wants to go. Then gently and gradually encourage him to go where you want to go. The use of praise and food rewards is useful at this stage. Check with your local council for the location of your nearest dog obedience club. They will tell you at what age you can take your puppy along for more formal training. In the

meantime, the basics of sit, come, stand and walking to heel can be taught in short 5-10 minute sessions as young dogs are easily tired and distracted. For the same reasons, these lessons should be repeated every day to reinforce them in the young dog's mind.

Socializing

It cannot be emphasized enough how important socializing is to a future as a well-adjusted dog. You should take your Beagle with you wherever you can, as soon as it is safe for your dog to be out and about (this will depend on vaccinations etc., ask your vet or breeder). Trips in the car, walks on the street, to the shops, to the beach, with kids and with other dogs, will all help with socialization.



Show training

If you have purchased your young dog to show at conformation shows, it is almost certain that the breeder has been "standing" the Beagle in a show stance since they were able to stand on their own four feet. This is done to assess the young dog's progress and potential as a show dog. They may also have been fitted with a very soft collar to help being used to having something around the neck. This would be very helpful to future training, as it is the hardest thing for a young dog to get used to. Once you get your Beagle home you can continue to practise "show standing" every day. They will become so used to it, they will actually enjoy these one-on-one times with you. Teach your Beagle to walk and run on lead at your left side. They must also be taught to "stand for examination" while people run their hands over them, as a judge would at a show. As Beagles are examined on a table at shows, start very early to get your Beagle used to standing still on a table. Please supervise at all times while on the table.

New exhibitors would be well advised to attend dog shows and observe the Beagles and their handlers in the ring. Watch how they gait their dogs and stand them for the judge's examination. Watch what the judge asks each exhibitor to do. Practise all this at home with the help of family and friends.

Whether you purchase your Beagle for show, obedience or companionship, all dogs benefit from the type of training it takes to become a good canine citizen.

THE BEAGLE CLUB OF QUEENSLAND

In 1993 the Beagle Club of Queensland was established primarily to support and promote the breed in the show ring. In the past years, however, it has had a significant increase in membership of pet Beagle owners and has endeavoured to support the breed across all aspects of work, competition, and play that can be had by a Beagle and its family.

The club runs regular social events where Beagle lovers get together with their Beagles to enjoy the four-footed family. The club runs such social events as:

- Beach walks
- Bush walks
- Lure Coursing
- Drag Hunting
- Breakfasts and Dinners
- Training Days
- Fun Days

It is not uncommon to have over thirty Beagles and their owners at the walks and many more at the lure coursing and drag hunt days.

After the events, all the Beagle lovers get together to talk about their favourite subject, which is usually the antics that their Beagle got up to since the last event.

Along with the social events, the club also provides support and advice to Beagle owners or potential owners. The club conducts displays at events such as pet Expos to provide information and advice to the public on the breed.

Puppy Register

To save yourself work and money when it comes time to locate a puppy, the Beagle Club of Queensland provides a Puppy Register service. This service collects the details of puppy litters of club members including when they are available, the number in the litter, the sex of the puppies, and the contact details of the breeder. Contact the Puppy Register with one call or email, indicating your preferences for sex and colour. Details of all the current and upcoming litters will be given to you. If there are no litters available at any particular time, your name will be put onto a waiting list and you will be notified when a new litter is available.

Beagle Rescue Service

The Beagle Club of Queensland operates the Queensland Beagle Rescue. This program relocates Beagles that are unable to be kept in their current environment to a new home. The club often gets enquiries from families that would like to own a Beagle but do not want a young puppy. The club endeavours to locate a suitable older dog for the family. In some cases the club knows of a suitable dog and can place the Beagle in their new home. Other times the family may need to wait until a suitable Beagle is found. Depending on the circumstances, the club will either act as broker for the previous and new owners or will take the Beagle into care until a new owner can be found.

If the Beagle has a current owner, the club will act as a broker to locate a suitable home for the Beagle. The club will match the details of the Beagle to those of a person on their list looking for an older Beagle and put the two parties in contact with each other.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEAGLES

If the Beagle is from the pound or the RSPCA, the club will take the Beagle into care, get the dog into a suitable condition for sale, which includes having the dog desexed where necessary, wormed, vaccinated and examined by a Vet. These Beagles will then be sold to a suitable owner at a minimal cost to recover expenses.

There are several advantages of getting an older dog over a puppy:

- **You get what you see.** Young puppies can change quite considerably from 8 weeks to adult. Older dogs are usually either fully-grown or close to being fully-grown. Their size, colour and structure will remain largely unchanged.
- **No puppy problems.** Many people love raising a Beagle from a very early age but owning a puppy is more demanding than owning an older dog. Toilet training, lead training and general obedience, teething, and general puppy behaviour are all things that a new puppy owner will need to work at. These may not be needed for an older dog.
- **Less feeding.** Some people may not realise that it is easier to feed older Beagles than young puppies. Puppies may need to be fed up to three times a day until they are six months of age and at least twice a day until they are adult. Older dogs need only one meal a day.

Before you contact the club for a rescue Beagle, you need to think about a few things. You need to make sure your house is appropriate for a Beagle. Good secure fences and a loving family with lots of time to give attention and exercise to your new family member are a must. You also need to think about the following things:

- Do I want a boy or girl Beagle?
- What colour Beagle would I like?
- How old can the Beagle be that am I prepared to bring home?
- Do I want a desexed Beagle or am I prepared to desex the Beagle?

Once you have thought about these questions contact the club's Beagle Rescue Service.

The Beagle Club of Queensland Contact Details

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