

NEWFOUNDLAND

BREED INFORMATION



© NEWFOUNDLAND CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, INC

*This booklet is adapted from the breed information leaflet of The Newfoundland Club (UK)
and used with permission of The Newfoundland Club (UK).*

*The aim of this publication is to help prospective puppy owners by presenting information on issues
which should be addressed by anyone considering living with a Newfoundland.*

NEWFOUNDLANDS are the ‘gentle giants’ of the dog world. They are large and powerful dogs yet their gentle and amiable nature makes them ideal family dogs. They have a great affinity with water and humans. Newfs, as they are often called, thrive on human companionship.

As puppies and adolescents they are frequently clumsy, enthusiastic, invariably in your way, generally ‘deaf’ to your commands and often wet and muddy. They are capable of carrying considerable vegetation into the house in their coat and feet, and shed their coat twice a year.

Whilst the uninitiated may call them Shetland ponies, Newf lovers tend to think of them as the living version of their childhood teddy bear.

If you are houseproud, lead a busy life or are out at work full-time, this is NOT the breed for you. They need love, attention, good food, regular grooming, more love, basic obedience training, space to run and a loving ‘family’. This is not a breed to live in a kennel or be left alone, either shut outside or in another room. They demand the company of humans and are happiest living as one of the family – but with all the doors wide open please. BE WARNED they can become addictive, and many people have more than one.

HISTORY OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND BREED

The Newfoundland developed on the island from which it takes its name. It is almost certainly a combination of the ancient, native Indian dogs and the many European breeds that were carried across the Atlantic by explorers and fishermen from the 15th century onwards. By the end of the 17th century, this ‘cocktail’ had stabilised into a large, web-footed, thick-coated dog, capable of draught and water work. Its useful qualities were soon recognised well beyond the North American continent, as was its equable temperament that meant it worked well with other dogs and was easily trained. Imported in considerable numbers throughout Europe, these dogs soon attracted the attention of rich people, who bought them to ornament their estates and entertain (and watch over) their children.

Many tales have been told of the courage displayed by Newfoundlands in lifesaving exploits and this attracted the attention of a large number of artists, who have portrayed the dogs in paint, stone, bronze and porcelain over the last two centuries.

Newfoundlands came to Australia in the 1800’s with wealthy settlers and they have remained in modest numbers since that time. Since the 1960’s breeders have imported Newfs (primarily dogs) from English, American, Canadian, Danish and Scandinavian lines and more recently, dogs and frozen semen has come from several other European countries. With the growing use of imported frozen semen a wider gene pool has evolved. The Newfs have adapted well to the warmer climate and today they are found in all States of Australia.

Internet website: A Brief History of the Newfoundland in Australia – <http://www.geocities.com/newfsinaus>

NEWFOUNDLAND CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC

The Newfoundland Club of South Australia, Inc. (NCSA) is an affiliate club of Dogs SA. Club activities include:

Breed Information: The Club’s activities in this area include the Club’s Breed Information Booklet and other resources accessed from the NCSA website. We also attend activities such as Animal Expos. The Club’s Puppy Parenting Handbook is a very useful resource for prospective and new puppy owners.

Social Activities: For many years the Club held monthly beach walks during the cooler months. These are usually followed by a leisurely coffee break. Annually there has been a get together with fun activities and an educational aspect eg. ademonstration of grooming, training tips, canine massage, handling a large dog in emergency situations, acupuncture for arthritis, ear care, nail clipping and advice re summer precautions. A bi-monthly newsletter full of Newfy news is forwarded electronically.

Conformation Shows: The NCSA Championship Dog Show is usually held annually in July.

Merchandise: The NCSA has the most comprehensive range of Newf merchandise in Australia and it is sent all over the country. The sale of Newf merchandise has been a major fundraiser and subsidises a range of Club activities.

Welfare: The Club provides a rescue service to assist Newfoundlands in need of rehoming. The Club also gives an annual donation to the Health Challenge of the Newfoundland Club of America which financially supports research into conditions affecting the breed.

Club Contact: For breed information, merchandise or membership, contact the Secretary, Chris Hill
Ph. 8524 2264 e-mail jessbear.newfs@bigpond.com

Club website: www.newfclubsa.com Check out the newfy merchandise.

IS THIS THE BREED FOR YOU?

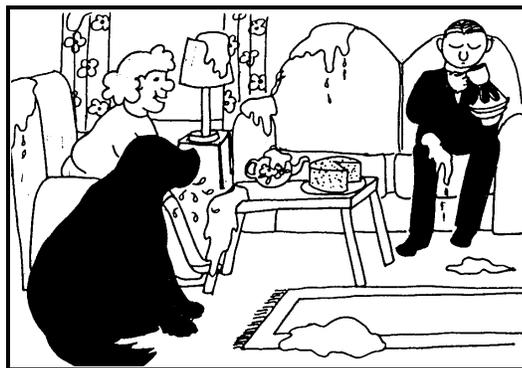
The beautiful, cuddly, fluffy, bundle of love you see at the breeders will become 35 kg of energy within a few months. That lovely coat sheds hair everywhere, no outfit in your wardrobe will be without its sprinkling, you will leave hairs wherever you go, and every container of yoghurt will contain at least one! A Newf thinks nothing of immersing his/her head in a bucket of water then walking over, dripping wet, to give you a love. You will also soon marvel at the tenacious, glue-like quality of DROOL!

A Newfoundland could still be acting like a puppy when two years old, weighs at least 60 kg and is 65 cms or so at the shoulder. Gentle and loving the Newf will be, but the frail, elderly and the very young may be knocked aside in the dog's joyous rush to greet them. This is why basic obedience training is so important and must be started as soon as possible.

Newfoundlands are not all like 'peas in a pod'; heights range from 60-75cms at the shoulder, weights may be from 45-80kg at maturity; heads can vary between long and narrow to short and broad; body shape differs too, as does coat density and length. The majority of Newfs have a black coat but there are also the Landseer (white with black markings) and brown.

They are large dogs and have an appetite to suit; they require good quality food to keep them healthy and this is not cheap. Newfoundlands are larger than most breeds and as most medication doses are administered according to weight, there are increased veterinary costs. While most Newfoundlands are happy at times just to be dozing never forget that this is a working breed and as such should have regular exercise. Grooming must be done on a regular basis to keep the dog's skin in a healthy condition.

Currently in Australia the average cost of a Newfoundland puppy is \$3500. However bear in mind that it will also cost nearly \$1000 (approx \$20/week) in the first year or so of the pup's life. Premium food for a pup growing 1 kg a week, vaccinations, regular worm & heartworm medications, puppy preschool classes, basic obedience training, stainless steel bowls, lead, brush & comb, toys, shampoo as well as the cost of puppy damage through chewing, digging etc. all contribute to the associated expense. A good quality vacuum cleaner is a must and before long the benefit of a professional dog hair drier will become apparent. Pet insurance is highly recommended.



Of course, they do dribble a bit!

DON'T BUY A NEWFOUNDLAND IF.....

This article has been adapted from the original "DON'T BUY A BOUVIER" by Pam Green (c 1992). There has been some minor modification for Australian readers. Permission to reprint and distribute the article to prospective puppy buyers has been freely given "in the hopes of saving innocent dogs from neglect and abandonment by those who should never have required them in the first place."

Interested in buying a Newf? You must be or you wouldn't be reading this. You've already heard how marvellous Newfies are. Well, I think you should also hear, before it's too late, that NEWFOUNDLANDS ARE NOT THE PERFECT BREED FOR EVERYONE. As a breed they have a few features that some people find charming, but that some people find mildly unpleasant and some people find downright intolerable.

There are different breeds for different needs. There are over 200 purebred breeds of dogs in the world. Maybe you'd be better off with some other breed. Maybe you'd be better off with a cat. Maybe you'd be better off with goldfish, a parakeet, a hamster, or some house-plants.

DON'T BUY A NEWFOUNDLAND IF YOU ARE ATTRACTED TO THE BREED "CHIEFLY" BY ITS APPEARANCE.

The appearance of the Newfoundlands you have seen in the show ring is the product of many hours of bathing and grooming. This carefully constructed beauty is fleeting: a few minutes of freedom, romping through the fields or strolling in the rain restores the natural look. The natural look of the Newfie is that of a large, shaggy farm dog, usually with some dirt and weed clinging to his tousled coat. His aesthetics are those of an unmade bed. The true beauty of the Newf lies in his character, not in his appearance. There are many other breeds whose natural beauty of appearance far exceeds that of the Newf. Some of the long-coated and most of the short-coated breeds' appearances are less dependent on grooming than is that of the Newfie. (See also the section on grooming below.)

DON'T BUY A NEWF IF YOU ARE UNWILLING TO SHARE YOUR HOUSE AND YOUR LIFE WITH YOUR DOG.

Newfies were bred to share in the work of the family (fishing, pulling carts etc.) and to spend most of their waking hours working with the family. They thrive on companionship and they want to be wherever you are. They are happiest living with you in your house and going with you when you go out. While they usually tolerate being left at home by themselves (preferably with a dog-door giving them access to the fenced yard), they should not be relegated to the backyard or kennel. A puppy exiled from the house is likely to grow up to be unsociable, unruly, and unhappy. He may well develop pastimes, such as digging or barking, that will displease you and/or your neighbors. An adult so exiled will be miserable too. If you don't strongly prefer to have your dog's companionship as much as possible, enjoying having him sleep in your bedroom at night and sharing many of your activities by day, you should choose a breed less oriented to human companionship. Likewise if your job or other obligations prevent you from spending much time with your dog. No dog is really happy without companionship but the pack hounds are more tolerant of being kenneled or yarded so long as it is groups of 2 or more. A better choice would be a cat, as they are solitary by nature.

DON'T BUY A NEWFOUNDLAND IF YOU DON'T INTEND TO EDUCATE (TRAIN) YOUR DOG.

Basic obedience and household rules training is NOT optional for the Newf. As an absolute minimum, you must teach him to reliably respond to commands to come, to lie down, to stay, and to walk at your side, on or off leash and regardless of temptations. You must also teach him to respect your household rules e.g. Is he allowed to get on the furniture? Is he allowed to beg at the table? What you allow or forbid is unimportant, but it is "critical" that you, not the dog, make these choices and that you enforce your rules consistently. You must commit yourself to attending an 8 to 10 week series of weekly lessons at a local obedience club or professional trainer and to doing one or two short (5 to 20 minutes) homework sessions per day. As commands are learned, they must be integrated into your daily life by being used whenever appropriate and enforced consistently. Young Newfie puppies are relatively easy to train; they are eager to

please, intelligent, and calm-natured, with relatively good attention span. Once a Newfie has learned something, he tends to retain it well. Your cute, sweet little Newf puppy will grow up to be a large, powerful dog. If he has grown up respecting you and your rules, then all his physical and mental strength will work for you. But if he has grown up without rules and guidance from you, surely he will make his own rules and his physical and mental powers will often act in opposition to your needs and desires. For example; he may tow you down the street as if competing in a sled-dog race; he may grab food off the table; he may forbid your guests entry to his home.

This training cannot be delegated to someone else, e.g. by sending the dog away to “boarding school”, because the relationship of respect and obedience is personal between the dog and the individual who does the training. While you definitely may want the help of an experienced trainer to teach you how to train your dog, you yourself must actually train your Newf. As each lesson is well learned, then the rest of the household (except young children) must also work with dog, insisting he obey them as well.

Many of the Newfs that are rescued from Pounds and Shelters show clearly that they have received little or no basic training, neither in obedience nor in household deportment, yet these same dogs respond well to such training by the rescuer or the adopter. It seems likely that a failure to train the dog is a significant cause of Newf abandonment.

If you don't intend to educate your dog, preferably during puppyhood, you would be better off with a breed that is both small and socially submissive. Such a dog does require training, but a little bit goes further than with a Newf. In the opposite direction, if your goals in obedience training are oriented towards success at high level competitions, please realise that the Newfie is not among the half dozen breeds best suited to such highly polished performance. (Newfs can, with adequate training, excel at such working competitions as agility, carting, tracking and water rescue.)

DON'T BUY A NEWFOUNDLAND IF YOU LACK LEADERSHIP (SELF-ASSERTIVE) PERSONALITY.

Dogs do not believe in social equality. They live in a social hierarchy led by a pack-leader (Alpha). The alpha dog is generally benevolent, affectionate, and non-bullying towards his subordinates; but there is never any doubt in his mind or in theirs that the alpha is the boss and makes the rules. Whatever the breed, if you do not assume the leadership, the dog will do so sooner or later and with more or less unpleasant consequences for the abdicating owner. Like the untrained dog, the pack leader dog makes his own rules and enforces them against other members of the household by means of a dominant physical posture and a hard-eyed stare, followed by a snarl, then a knockdown blow or a bite. Breeds differ in tendencies towards social dominance; and individuals within a breed differ considerably. You do not have to have the personality or mannerisms of a Marine boot camp Sergeant, but you do have to have the calm, quiet self-assurance and self assertion of the successful parent (“Because I'm your mother, that's why.”) or successful grade-school teacher.

If the whole idea of “being the boss” frightens or repels you, don't get a dog at all. Cats don't expect leadership. A caged bird or hamster, or fish doesn't need leadership or household rules. Leadership and training are inextricably intertwined; leadership personality enables you to train your dog, and being trained by you reinforces your dog's perception of you as the alpha.

DON'T BUY A NEWFIE IF YOU DON'T LIKE VALUE LAID-BACK COMPANIONSHIP AND CALM AFFECTION.

A Newf becomes deeply attached and devoted to his own family, but he doesn't “wear his heart on his sleeve”. Some are noticeably reserved, others are more outgoing, but few adults are usually exuberantly demonstrative of their affections. They like to be near you, usually in the same room, preferably on a comfortable pad or cushion in a corner or under a table, just “keeping you company”. They enjoy conversation, petting and cuddling when you offer it, but they are moderate and not overbearing in coming to you to demand much attention. They are emotionally sensitive to their favorite people: when you are joyful, proud, angry, or grief-stricken, your Newf will immediately perceive it and will believe himself to be the cause.

The relationship can be one of great mellows, depth and subtlety; it is a relation on an adult-to-adult level, although certainly not one devoid of playfulness. As puppies, of course, they will be more dependent, more playful, and more demonstrative. In summary, Newfs tend to be sober and thoughtful, rather than giddy clowns or sycophants.

DON'T BUY A NEWFIE IF YOU ARE FASTIDIOUS ABOUT THE NEATNESS OF YOUR HOME.

The Newfoundland's thick shaggy coat and his love of playing in water and mud combine to make him a highly efficient transporter of dirt into your home, depositing same on your floors and rugs and possibly also on your furniture and clothes. One Newf coming in from a few minutes outdoors on a rainy day can turn an immaculate house into an instant hog wallow. His full chest soaks up water every time he takes a drink, then releases same drippingly across your floor or soppingly into your lap. Newfoundlands are seasonal shedders, and in spring can easily fill a trash bag with balls of hair from a grooming session, or clog a vacuum cleaner if left to shed in the house. I don't mean to imply that you must be a slob or slattern to live happily with a Newf, but you do have to have the attitude that your dog's company means more to you than does neatness and you do have to be comfortable with a less than immaculate house.

While all dogs, like all children, create a greater or lesser degree of household mess, almost all other breeds of dog (except the Old English Sheepdog) are less troublesome than the Newfie in this respect. The Basenji is perhaps the cleanest, due to its cat-like habits; but cats are cleaner yet, and goldfish hardly ever mess up the house.

DON'T BUY A NEWFOUNDLAND IF YOU FIND DROOL TOTALLY REPELLENT.

Most Newfie owners begin with some degree of distaste for drool, but as this is an integral part of the Newf, this dislike usually progresses to some level of nonchalance. A sure sign of a Newf addict is that not only do they not understand other people's squeamishness for this substance, they spend many hours trying to come up with useful purposes for the gallons of drool that can be produced on a regular basis. Some say that the world record "drool toss" from an adult Newf is over 20 feet! This makes your walls and ceilings well within reach of even an average drooler. Newfie's drool because of the jaw and mouth structure, which allows them to breathe while performing water rescue, this is a quality inherent in the breed.

If you cannot get used to the idea of drool in your house, then try one of the many breeds of dogs that do not drool. Newfs are definitely in the minority in this category. Although I have heard of cats who drool, the quantity is not remotely comparable, and hamsters don't drool at all.

DON'T BUY A NEWFIE IF YOU DISLIKE DOING REGULAR GROOMING.

The thick shaggy Newfoundland coat demands regular grooming, not merely to look tolerably nice, but also to preserve the health of skin underneath and to detect and remove foxtails, ticks and other dangerous invaders. For "pet" grooming, you should expect to spend 10-15 minutes a day (e.g. while listening to music or watching television) on alternative days or half an hour twice a week. Of course any time your Newf gets into any coat-adhering vegetation, you are likely to be in for an hour or more of remedial work. During grass seed season, you must inspect feet and other vulnerable areas daily. In the tropics you will need to inspect for ticks daily. "Pet" grooming does not require a great deal of skill, but does require time and regularity. "Show" (beauty contest) grooming requires a great deal of skill and considerably more time and effort or expensive professional grooming.

Almost every Newfie that is rescued out of a Pound or Shelter shows the effects of many months of non-grooming, resulting in massive matting and horrendous filthiness, sometimes with urine and faeces cemented into the rear portions of the coat. It appears that unwillingness to keep up the coat care is a primary cause of abandonment.

Many other breeds of dog require less grooming, short coated breeds require very little.

DON'T BUY A NEWFIE IF YOU DISLIKE DAILY PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

Newfs need exercise to maintain the health of heart and lungs and to maintain muscle tone. Because of his mellow, laid-back, often lazy, disposition, your Newfie will not give himself enough exercise unless you accompany him or play with him. An adult Newf should walk a kilometre or more, as you walk briskly besides him. For older puppies, shorter and slower walks, are preferred for exercise.

All dogs need daily exercise of greater or lesser length and vigor. If providing this exercise is beyond you, physically or temperamentally, then choose one of the many small and energetic breeds that can exercise itself within your fenced yard. Most of the Toys and Terriers fit this description, but don't be surprised if a Terrier is inclined to dig in the earth since digging out critters is the job that they were bred to do. Cats can be exercised indoors with mouse-on-a-string toys. Hamsters will exercise themselves on a wire wheel. House plants don't need exercise.

DON'T BUY A NEWFIE IF YOU BELIEVE THAT DOGS SHOULD RUN "FREE".

Whether you live in town or country, no dog can safely be left to run "free" outside your fenced property and without your direct supervision and control. The price of such "freedom" is inevitably injury or death; from dogfights, from automobiles, from the Pound or from justifiably irate neighbors. Even though Newfs are home-loving and less inclined to roam than most breeds, an unfenced Newf is destined for disaster. A thoroughly obedience-trained Newfie can enjoy the limited and supervised freedom of off-leash walks with you in appropriately chosen environments.

If you don't want the responsibility of confining and supervising your pet, then no breed of dog is suitable for you. A neutered cat will survive such irresponsibly given "freedom" somewhat longer than a dog, but will eventually come to grief. A better answer for those who crave a "free" pet is to set out feeding stations for some of the indigenous wildlife, which will visit for handouts and which may eventually tolerate your close observation.

DON'T BUY A NEWFOUNDLAND IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY, FEED, AND PROVIDE HEALTH CARE FOR ONE.

Newfoundlands are not a cheap breed to buy, as running a careful breeding program with due regard for temperament, trainability, and physical soundness (hips especially) cannot be done cheaply. The time the breeder should put into each puppy's "preschool" and socialization is also costly. The "bargain" puppy from a "back-yard breeder" who unselectively mates any two Newfs who happen to be of opposite sex may well prove to be extremely costly in terms of bad temperament, bad health, and lack of essential socialization. In contrast, the occasional adult or older pup is available at a modest price from a disenchanted owner or from a breeder, shelter, or rescuer to whom the dog was abandoned; most of these "used" Newfs are capable of becoming a marvellous dog for you if you can provide training, leadership, and understanding. Whatever the initial cost of your Newfoundland, the upkeep will not be cheap. Being large dogs, Newfs eat relatively large meals. (Need I add that what goes in one end must eventually come out the other ?) Large dogs tend to have larger veterinary bills, as the amount of anaesthesia and of most medications is proportional to body weight.

Spaying or neutering, which costs more for larger dogs, is an essential expense for virtually all pet Newfs, as it "takes the worry out of being close", prevents serious health problems in later life, and makes the dog a more pleasant companion. Newfoundlands are subject to two conditions that can be costly to treat; hip dysplasia and bloat. (Your best insurance against dysplasia is to buy only from a litter bred from sound parents and indeed, grandparents). While bloat may have a genetic predisposition, there are no predictive tests allowing selective breeding against it. (Your best prevention is not to feed your dog too soon before or after strenuous exercise.) Professional grooming, if you use it, is expensive. An adequate set of grooming tools for use at home adds up to a tidy sum, but once purchased will last many dog-lifetimes. Finally the modest fee for participation in a series of basic obedience training is an essential investment in harmonious living with your dog; such fees are the same for all breeds. The modest annual outlays for immunization and for local registration are generally the same for all breeds, though most councils have a

lower registration fee for spayed/neutered dogs. (In current Australian conditions, heartworm prevention medication is an essential additional cost)

All dogs, of whatever breed and however cheaply acquired, require significant upkeep costs, and all are subject to highly expensive veterinary emergencies. Likewise all cats.

DON'T BUY A NEWFIE IF YOU WANT THE "LATEST, GREATEST FEROCIOUS KILLER ATTACK DOG".

The Newfoundland's famous disposition as the "Gentle Giants" is not a fable, a Newf with a typical disposition of the breed would prefer to slobber a criminal than attack one. Also because of selective breeding for water rescue, Newfies are "soft-mouthed" dogs.

In contrast to the protection-trained dog, trained to bite on direct command or in reaction to direct physical assault on his master, the "deterrent dog" dissuades the vast majority of aspiring burglars, rapists, and assailants by his presence, his appearance, and his demeanour. Seeing this dog, the potential wrong-doer simply decides to look for a safer victim elsewhere. For this job, all that is needed is a dog that is large and appears to be well-trained and unafraid. The Newfoundland can serve this role admirably, with the added assets of generally dark color and shaggy "bestial" appearance adding to the impression of formidability and fearsomeness. If the dog has been taught to bark a few times on command, e.g. "Fang, watch him!" rather than "Fifi, speak for a cookie", this skill can be useful to augment the deterrent effect.

DON'T BUY A NEWFOUNDLAND IF YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO COMMIT YOURSELF FOR THE DOG'S ENTIRE LIFETIME.

No dog deserves to be cast out because his owners want to move to a no-pet apartment or because he is no longer a cute puppy or didn't grow up to be a beauty contest winner or because his owners through lack of leadership and training have allowed him to become an unruly juvenile delinquent with a repertoire of undesirable behaviours. The prospect of a responsible and affectionate second home for a "used" dog are never very bright, but they are especially dim for a large, shaggy, poorly mannered dog. A Newf dumped into a Pound or Shelter has almost no chance of survival-unless he has the great good fortune to be spotted by someone dedicated to Newf Rescue. The prospects for adoption for a youngish, well-trained, and well-groomed Newfie whose owner seeks the assistance of the nearest Newf Club or Rescue Group are fairly good; but an older Newf has diminishing prospects. Be sure to contact your local Newf club or Rescue group if you are diagnosed as terminally ill or have other equally valid reason for seeking an adoptive home. Be sure to contact your local Newf club if you are beginning to have difficulties in training your Newfie, so these can be resolved. Be sure to make arrangements in your will or with your family to ensure continued care or adoptive home for your Newfoundland if you should pre-decease him.

The life span of a Newfoundland is approximately 10 years. If that seems too long a time for you to give an unequivocal loyalty to your Newfoundland, then please do not get one! Indeed, as most dogs have a life expectancy that is as long or longer, please do not get any dog!

If all the proceeding "bad news" about Newfies hasn't turned you away from the breed, then by all means DO GET A NEWF! They are every bit as wonderful as you have heard!

If buying a puppy, be sure to shop carefully for a "responsible" and "knowledgeable" breeder who places high priority on breeding for sound temperament and trainability and good health in all matings. Ensure the breeder is registered with the State Canine Controlling Body, eg. DogsSA.

Such a breeder will interrogate and educate potential buyers carefully.

Such a breeder will continue to be available for advice and consultation for the rest of the puppy's life and will insist in receiving the dog back if ever you are unable to keep it.



WHERE CAN YOU SEE NEWFOUNDLANDS?

Try to meet as many Newfoundlands and their owners as you can – but remember to wear your oldest clothes! Visit several breeders and meet Newfoundlands of all ages – not only the cute puppy, but the gangling adolescent, the mature dog and the geriatric. Visit the kennels and meet Newfs away from the pristine environment of the Show ring.



“Mud, mud, glorious mud...!”

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

When you buy a Newfoundland, you buy a dream. It is up to you to make sure the dream does not become a nightmare. You will have a responsibility to your dog; to your family; to the community in general and to other dog owners.

Do your research on the breed by reading breed specific books (available in some libraries), asking questions of as many breeders and Newf owners as possible as well as from your vet or one of several vets (familiar with the breed) that the Club can give contact addresses. On the link page of the Club website access the FAQ's (frequently asked questions on the breed).

You should do everything possible to ensure that your dog has a healthy, happy life:-

- Learn about basic dog care, there are several good books available (see book list at the end).
- Everyone wants a healthy dog, so it is wise to be aware of any possible future problems and make sure that the parents of your puppy are healthy dogs with good temperaments.
- Correct socialisation is vital – find out as much as you can about this.
- Basic training is a must – remember, you cannot **force** a dog that may weigh more than you – he has to **want** to obey you.
- Dog droppings are a health hazard so you should clean up after your dog when out walking – just because someone else doesn't is no excuse – everyone will know whose 'dump' it is (the size is a dead give away!) and it is an offence punishable by a fine.
- In the increasing anti-dog attitude of society it is essential that you know the laws about dog ownership, and comply with them. Although you become accustomed to the size of your Newf, bear in mind that for a person fearful of dogs, the sight of a large, over exuberant Newf can be quite terrifying. Always be aware of your dog's position in relation to others, particularly in crowded places, as drool or dog hair on good clothes, a heavy paw on an elderly foot or a wayward Newfie rear end bumping over a small child are not acceptable.

“Wasn't me Guv'nor – shorly there's the culprit !”



HEALTH AWARENESS

There are many reasons why you must make a very careful and informed choice before you buy a puppy. If you are tempted to buy a sickly puppy, you are risking anxiety, heartache, a lot of nursing and possibly great expense; you may never have the happy, healthy dog, which you had in mind.

Puppies should be wormed for roundworms several times until twelve weeks old, usually at 2, 4, 8, & 12 weeks, then as recommended by your vet.

Your puppy will have had the first vaccination prior to leaving the breeder. Ensure you are given the record of this and arrange with your vet when puppy is to have the subsequent vaccinations. Annual boosters will also be required.

Heartworm disease is caused by a parasite that lives within the dog's heart and adjacent blood vessels of the lungs. These parasites cause inflammation of the heart lining and the valves, and damage to blood vessels leading to and within the lungs. Adult heartworms can measure up to 5cms in length and whilst more than 350 worms have been recovered from a single dog, just 10 worms can cause a critical condition. The incidence of heartworm disease continues to spread in Australia. At present approximately 65% of the dog population now live in high risk heartworm areas. Preventative medication can be started on young puppy without the need for an initial blood test. Discuss this with your vet. An "allwormer" purchased from the supermarket may not include cover for heartworm. Treatment of dogs already infested with adult heartworm requires intense, expensive and extensive therapy (i.e. 2-3 months). A consequence of treatment is that the death of massive numbers of heartworms can cause great distress or sudden death in the treated dog.

The majority of Newfoundlands have black coats that absorb heat more readily than light coloured coats and they are, therefore, more prone to heat stress. It is important for you to learn ways to help your Newf cope with hot weather and prevent heat stress. Preventative measures, signs of heat stress and first aid are included in the Club's Puppy Parenting Handbook.

Health insurance is available for Newfoundlands – policies vary in price, the degree of cover and availability for other animals. Preventative treatments, such as worming and vaccination are not covered, neither are neutering operations or problems associated with breeding.

There is no breed without health problems, but Newfoundlands are generally healthy. As with a number of other giant breeds, the average life span of a Newfoundland is 8-10 years. However there are many 10 year olds who lead fit and happy lives. There are diseases that dogs suffer from where there is no screening test or little is known why the condition has developed. It is sensible to choose a puppy where the relatives live long, healthy lives.

There are certain problems within this breed that can be passed on in families.

In common with all large dogs, Newfoundlands can have problems with their hips called **hip dysplasia**.

The following information is from an article by Norma Bennett Woolf.

Copyright 1999 by Canis Major Publications. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Canine hip dysplasia is a general description of malformation of the hip joint that ultimately leads to arthritis. The hip joint is a ball-and-socket arrangement that allows for mobility of the dog's rear. The ball is the femoral head, the knob at the top of the upper leg bone or femur. The socket is the acetabulum, a scooped out area on the pelvic structure. The two parts must fit together and be lubricated by sufficient joint fluid to maintain structural soundness and avoid arthritis. Hip dysplasia is joint malformation that occurs when the ball and socket are misaligned, loosely fitted, or misshapen. Dysplastic dogs experience pain, generally are not as active as healthy dogs, and may need expensive surgery as they age.

Hip dysplasia is an inherited condition and diagnosis before breeding is necessary to keep breeding stock healthy and limit the occurrence in offspring.

Nutrition also plays a part: studies show that puppies pushed to rapid growth manifest more hip problems than siblings allowed to grow at a slower rate. Many veterinarians recommend puppies be fed adult

maintenance dog foods with less than 25 per cent protein and kept slightly hungry so their bones are not pushed into rapid growth that may be detrimental to good hip formation.

Hip dysplasia may be mild or debilitating. Mild cases need no more than the occasional aspirin; moderate cases can be corrected by surgery, and severe cases can result in painful crippling and euthanasia, even in pups less than a year old.

Myths about hip dysplasia abound and obscure both the seriousness of the disease and the opportunity to reduce its occurrence. For example, the presence or absence of hip dysplasia cannot be detected by observation. Dogs that seem perfectly agile as pups and young adults may actually be mildly dysplastic in one or both hips. Diagnosis is possible only by x-rays of the dog's hips.

Unfortunately, there are no guarantees; even when the breeders go to the expense of hip x-rays and only breed those with good or excellent hips, puppies can still develop bad hips.

Hip dysplasia is a developmental disease. Pups are born with normal hips and the changes occur as they grow. Therefore the importance of the impact of nutrition should be heeded. The environment of a growing puppy can also affect the hips and other joints. Due to their rapid growth, the joints of Newf puppies are relatively loose and over-exercising, falls on slippery surfaces, jumping down from heights and running up and down stairs/steps have all been identified as contributing to joint damage. Such incidents will not cause hip dysplasia but they can exacerbate the changes as well as resulting in other injuries.

Elbow anomaly (structural defect) has also been found in large breeds and usually when the dog is x-rayed for hip scoring, the elbows are checked at the same time.

Several breeds of dogs are known to have heart problems. A problem specific to Newfoundlands is called **Sub-aortic Stenosis (SAS)** and this condition can cause a heart murmur and lead to death at a young age. There is no genetic test available to detect carrier status in dogs. All puppies should be checked for the presence of a murmur by the breeder's vet before they leave the kennels. The heart should be rechecked again at 1 year as some murmurs can develop later. This condition is rare in Australia. Ongoing research studies in the United Kingdom and America are investigating SAS.

Cystinuria – *Cystine is one of many amino acids that are building blocks for proteins. Amino acids are part of the normal canine diet and are absorbed through the gut. They are freely filtered in the kidney, but are normally reabsorbed (nearly 100%) by special kidney transporters and, therefore, not lost. In dogs or humans with cystinuria, the kidney transporter for cystine and some other amino acids is defective; and because cystine readily precipitates in acid urine, crystals and later calculi (stones) can form in the kidney or bladder. These calculi can result in serious illness. Cystinuria occurs in human patients and many dog breeds, but likely the most severe form has been observed in Newfoundland dogs. Cystinuria is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait in Newfoundlands. (Dr Urs Giger – Pennsylvania Uni.) The DNA test that can identify normal, carrier and affected dogs is available in Australia. All breeders should have tested their breeding stock as Newfoundlands with carrier status & affected status have been identified in Australia.*

Special care needs are important when growth averages 50-60 kg in the first year of life!



Temperament – there is certainly no genetic test for a good temperament, which is so very important in a large dog breed. For this reason it is essential that you visit the kennel or more than one occasion and meet all the dogs there. Spend time with both parents of the puppy and any other offspring.

Whilst the conditions listed above are not the only genetic ones which may be found in a Newfoundland they are the ones more readily identified with the breed in Australia at this time. Remember that you need to do your own research on the breed by reading books about the breed and discussing it with your vet.

CHOOSING A BREEDER

Don't be in a rush – the more homework you do, the greater your chances of getting the right Newfoundland for you.

Once you have decided that this IS the breed for you, ask the owners of the dogs you admire, who bred them. This will give you an idea of where to start looking for your puppy. Contact several breeders and arrange to visit them (be prepared to travel). Be wary if the breeder will not allow you to visit and see all their dogs.

Allow plenty of time when you go to see the breeder. You may feel embarrassed about visiting them at home – don't be, because this is the only way to find out all you need to know. An ethical breeder will welcome such an opportunity – to get to know you, discuss all aspects of owning a Newfoundland and assure themselves that yours will be a suitable future home for one of their puppies.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PUPPY

The most useful piece of advice you can have, and please do take it, is to buy from a reliable breeder, only after seeing the mother with all of her puppies.

NEVER VISIT PUPPIES IF YOU HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH A SICK DOG.

Once your chosen litter is born, try to visit them at least twice, but not before they are four weeks old. Keep the following points in mind:

GENERAL

By four to five weeks every puppy should be able to stand, walk, run a little and hold its head up squarely. As the puppies run and play they should be able to balance to 'do a pooh' and have well co-ordinated movements.

Strong puppies are sturdy and compact.

The coat should be dense, soft, fluffy and clean – be suspicious of bare patches or scabs.

Make sure the skin is supple and a little loose.

The ears may look a little large, compared with the size of the head. Are they pink and clean inside?

IN ADDITION:

The breeder should tell you about bathing; training, exercise needs and particularly about breed traits such as hand holding and an amazing fascination with all water.

Ask the breeder to *show* you how to groom a Newfoundland. To keep a Newfoundland's coat and skin healthy, it must be groomed *right down to the skin* over the whole body, and not just have the surface hairs 'smoothed'.

You should expect the breeder to ask you many questions. They will want to satisfy themselves that you have the knowledge, time, lifestyle, facilities and are aware of the not inconsiderable costs associated with raising a giant breed pup.

While at the Breeder's house look for the following:

Are the premises clean?

Is there enough space for the number of dogs present – would you keep a dog under these conditions?

Do the dogs look happy, healthy and well cared for?

Are there any dogs on the premises you are not invited to see?

Notice the attitude of the owner to the dogs and the dogs to the owner – is it a happy relationship?

It is a good idea if your first visit to the breeder is made when they do not have a litter of puppies, especially if you have children. There is nothing so irresistible as a Newfoundland puppy and you will be tempted to buy despite all your good intentions. The breeder will be very busy at this time and the puppies will distract you from the purpose of your visit, which is to find out as much as possible about them and their dogs.

Good, strong, healthy puppies from caring breeders may need to be waited for!

QUESTIONS TO ASK A BREEDER & POINTS TO CONSIDER

A caring breeder will welcome your questions and answer them gladly and truthfully. Your chosen breeder should become a friend – to share the good times and help you through any bad ones!

How much will the puppy cost and what do you consider the cost of rearing a puppy in the first year?

What is the feeding regime?

If you have any concerns re puppy's diet discuss this with the breeder and/or your vet.

Should you decide to change the diet recommended to you by the breeder it is important to wait for a while until puppy is over the stress of joining his new family. Any change must be done very gradually to allow the puppy's immature digestive system to adjust to the new food.

Will the puppy be registered with the Canine Association?

There are two types of registration - full or limited.

With limited registration the dog is: (a) ineligible for exhibition in Conformation Exhibition
(b) ineligible to be used for breeding purposes
(c) not entire or desexed
(d) ineligible for export.

Which bitch can I expect a puppy from?

How old is the bitch and how many litters has she had?

Can I see any of her previous puppies?

Can I spend some time with the bitch so I can see what her temperament is like?

Which dog will be the father of her next litter?

How old is he and can I see any of his previous puppies?

Have the bitch and dog been hip scored & if so, what were the results?

Hip Scoring: Once the dog is over 12 months, the hips can be xrayed to detect hip dysplasia. The xrays must be done under general anaesthetic rather than sedation as the degree of laxity in the hip joint is crucial to the diagnosis. Other changes that are measured are secondary to this finding. The xrays are sent away to be examined by a specialist skilled in interpreting the findings. Points are allotted for ill-fitting bones and abnormal wear of the joint in each hip.

The scale of points is from 0 to 53 for each hip. Perfect hips score 0/0 (0 is for the right hip and 0 is for the left hip) and are rare in Newfoundlands. The higher the score, the more likely the dog may develop severe, painful, crippling arthritis. The average total score (both hips added together) in Newfoundlands is currently in the low 20's.

Breeders wishing to reduce the risk of hip dysplasia in the dogs they breed should only mate dogs and bitches with a score well below this number.

There is no guarantee that breeding a dog and bitch who both have scores of 0/0 will produce a litter of 0/0 scoring offspring, but the lower the scores of the parents the better the chances of having a sound Newfoundland, given sensible rearing.

Currently in Australia it is not compulsory for breeders to hip score their breeding stock. In the past many have not done so due to the risk associated with anaesthesia. The latter is not so much of a concern nowadays. Established breeders know their lines for a number of generations and also take other structural factors into consideration when planning matings.

How frequently do you have a litter for sale?

Some breeders may not have a litter available for some time.

Will you take my dog back if I can no longer care for it?

How old will my puppy be when I collect it?

Where will the litter be born and raised?

They should be born in a quiet place, but brought up with increasing exposure to a wide range of environmental stimuli as they grow eg, children, loud noises such as vacuum cleaner or traffic, other animals & toys.

Where do your puppies play and how much human contact do they have?

A puppy's future behaviour will be influenced by its mother and by its relationship with its littermates: the more a puppy has been handled, the more likely it is to respond to training. Puppies raised with little human contact can be very difficult to train.

How do you socialise your puppies?

The experiences a puppy has between three and twelve weeks (early socialisation) are critical in the development of personality.

How often do you worm your puppies?

They should be wormed for roundworms at 2, 4, 8 & 12 weeks.

Will the puppies be checked by a vet before they go to their new homes?

Every puppy should have a veterinary check before it leaves the breeder.

If I have any problems, will you offer me help and advice?

What happens should health problems arise?



DECISION MADE

It is very important that the decision to add a Newfoundland to your family is agreed to by all members of the family, as it will impact on every person in the family. This ranges from the ongoing financial costs, the time commitment for regular grooming and training, the love and attention a Newf expects and deserves, to the Newf taking up the entire rear seat in the family car or the need to get a station wagon!

Should the decision to purchase a Newfoundland puppy be made, ask the breeder for one of the Club's Puppy Parenting Handbooks so that you can read it prior to taking pup home. If the breeder is not providing one, they are available from the Club secretary. It is recommended that you take your puppy to visit your own vet for an introductory checkup within 24-48 hours after taking puppy home. If you do not have a vet, ask your breeder if they can refer to one that is accustomed to handling large breed dogs.

Check with your veterinarian about Puppy Preschool classes. This is a very valuable resource as the pup's socialisation and behaviour with people and other dogs can be influenced between 6 –12 weeks of age. If your vet does not conduct them, information on classes is available through the Club.

Remember that your breeder should be an ongoing resource for you if you have any concerns regarding your puppy's growth, behaviour and care needs. Your vet is another important resource.

IS YOUR HOME PUPPY FRIENDLY?

Check the garden to ensure there is no snail bait, chemicals, fertilisers or toxic plants. A good fence is essential - you may also need to put wire mesh under fences or to cover gaps that a small puppy could venture through. (CAUTION – Ensure that there are no sharp cut ends of wire left, if necessary cover with insulating tape to protect puppy's eyes). Think about where you can safely store your garden hose!

Ensure that the pup will have access to shady areas. This may be provided by trees, shrubs, verandah or shade cloth structure.

Steps, stairways, terraces, garden ponds and swimming pools, covered or uncovered are potential hazards. Ensure puppy will not be able to access these areas unsupervised.

Check doors can be closed to the bedrooms, so puppy cannot gain access and chew up your good leather shoes etc.

Secure all medicines, especially contraceptive pills (the most common package reported to breeders as being chewed by pups), cleaning agents, cockroach baits and deodorant blocks.

The cool tiled floors of bathrooms are popular sleeping places for Newfoundlands, especially in summer, so a routine of shutting the toilet lid is essential (puppy will not understand that this is not the place to drink). Other hazards in the toilet are a deodorant block in the toilet bowl, toilet roll & cleaners.

Place telephone and electrical cords out of reach. A pup's sharp teeth have been known to sever a telephone cord within 10 minutes of arriving in it's new home. Care will need to be taken where remote control units and mobile phones are left.

If there are any butane gas cigarette lighters in the home put these well out of puppy's reach. They are small and brightly coloured and might be attractive to puppy but the butane is poisonous.

YOUR LIVES TOGETHER

With lots of work in the early months your adult Newfoundland will eventually be well behaved and eager to please. Your Newf will repay the time and effort you took during the first year, many times throughout the coming years.

WHY TRAIN?

Although your dog can be akin to a member of the family, a dog is a dog, is a dog!

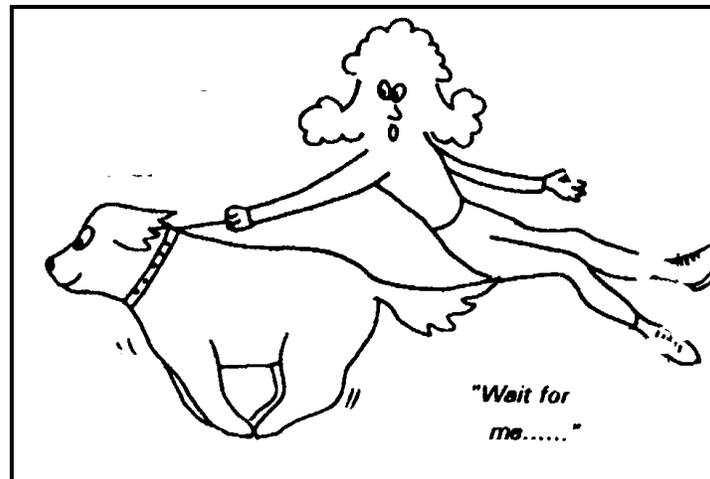
It will naturally revert to instinctive behaviour in certain situations unless it receives socialization and early behaviour training (by 16 weeks) and then ongoing positive reinforcement of good behaviour, and correction of any misbehaviour and training throughout its life.

Do not believe the fallacy that your dog will grow out of bad habits – this does not happen. This behaviour requires early correction and consistent positive reinforcement of the good behaviour you desire.

The onus is really on you to decide if you want a dog that will:

- **Steal food from the kitchen bench or table.** Remember a Newf has a substantial height and reach advantage. Also there is a significant risk that in doing this the dog may ingest a potential lethal item such as medication, rings or deodorant blocks.
- **Beg at the table.** Once again size and height are on the dogs side and the drool will not enhance your appetite.
- **Jump up on people or the couch.**
At a trial in England in 1998 the owner of a Newfoundland who jumped up and knocked over a frail pensioner, received a fine of £37,500. Included in the damage claim was £10,300 for a hip replacement operation, £14,000 for pain & suffering and £9,370 to cover costs, involving employing a gardener and reimbursing the wife for her care.
- **Rush through doorways or the house** brushing aside adults, children and objects. Once again there is a real risk of injury if this behaviour is allowed to occur. It could be to you, your child, a visitor or elderly relative.
- **Tear washing off the line.** It is always someone's favourite piece of clothing and expensive.
- **Dig trenches in the garden.** No dog has a degree in landscape gardening.

If these behaviours are not what you want in your dog, do not let your puppy think they are. It is much easier to shape good behaviour early than try to correct learned bad habits at a later stage.



RESOURCE LIST

BOOKS

Breed Specific

The Newfoundland – Gentle Giant
Jo Ann Riley
2004 Alpine Blue Ribbon Books

In the Company of Newfs – A Shared Life
Rhoda Lerman
Henry Holt & Company, Inc.

Puppy Parenting Handbook
Newfoundland Club of South Australia, Inc.

Newfoundlands Today
Hedd & Del Richards
1997 Ringpress Books

The Newfoundland Companion Dog, Water Dog
Joan C Bendure
1994 Howell Book House Inc

The Newfoundland
Third Edition, Edited by Carol Cooper
1989 The Newfoundland Club (UK)

Behaviour

Dog Training – The gentle modern method
David Weston
1996 Hyland House

Dog Problems – The gentle modern cure
David Weston & Ruth Ross
1993 Hyland House

General Dog Care

Everydog: The Complete Book of Dog Care
Eric Allan & Rowen Blogg
1997 Oxford Press

The Dog Owner's Manual
Karen Hedberg
1989 The Watermark Press

Health

Guide to First Aid for Your Pet
Carole Harvey-Stevenson V.N.
1996 (Order through veterinarians)

Miscellaneous

Dogs on Holiday
Robyn McGill & Ian Gilkes
1999 K & L Gilkes Pty. Ltd.

INTERNET

Check out the links on the NCSA website for Newfy resources

Dog Owner's Guide (health & behavioural articles) - <http://www.canismajor.com>

A Brief History of the Newfoundland in Australia - <http://www.geocities.com/newfsinaus>

All Breed dog site featuring some Newf breeders in Australia and helpful resource links - <http://www.dogzonline.com.au>

Newfie-specific list:

America – Newf-L listproc@lists.colorado.edu
with subscribe newf-l in the body (not the subject line) of the message.

Caution: joining lists brings many posts so be prepared to check & clear mail daily!

