

## **Puppy requirements, is a puppy right for you?**

There may be many reasons why you are considering a Golden Retriever or Bernese Mountain Dog, you may be looking for a pet that is good with children, be interested in a dog for showing or working or just a loving companion.

Before you buy, I suggest that you consider why you want a dog. Remember a Golden Retriever has a life expectancy of anything from 12 to 14 years and a Berner 7 to 9 yrs. and hopefully longer, so this is a long term commitment for yourself and the family.

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you look at any pups.

### **Do you have the time?**

Dogs are pack animals and like to be around people. A young puppy needs company. Are you prepared to get up an hour earlier before work to spend some individual time with your puppy? Have someone come in throughout the day to feed and let your puppy out for possibly an hour at a time and dedicate your evenings to them. A puppy or indeed an older dog will become stressed and destructive if left alone for long periods. They are inquisitive and willing to play and learn. Are you prepared to take your puppy to obedience training and out into the big world to socialize them? The Golden Retriever is a sporting breed and the Bernese Mountain Dog is a working breed and therefore need a good amount of exercise, like lots of walks during the day. A tired puppy is a happy puppy.

### **Toilet Training**

You will have to start toilet training right away. This means taking him out when he wakes and after each meal and play session. Without attention it will be virtually impossible to toilet train.

### **Is your yard secure?**

It is so important that your yard has adequate fencing and is secure. A young puppy is naturally curious and will explore any hole or gap he can find. Remember some plants and daffodil bulbs are poisonous so make sure that these are out of reach. <http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants> . It will be to your advantage if he is encouraged to use a particular area of garden to do his business.

### **Crate Training**

Your flooring and woodwork are in serious danger as well as other items in your home if someone is not around to watch the puppy! It is also for the safety of the puppy. It makes it easier to toilet train a puppy as most dogs don't like to do their business in their den, so will hold it until they can get outside. It also prepares them if they have to go to the veterinarian or a kennel while on vacation to be in a crate, it will be less stressful on them.

## **Are the children old enough to take on the responsibility of a dog?**

Although both breeds make excellent family pets, and chosen with care from the right breeder, will be happy with young children. The younger members must realize that the puppy is an animal and not a toy and should respect the puppy or dogs boundaries. Young children should never be left alone with a puppy or dog. Dogs are a long term commitment and not a whim, so discuss this thoroughly before you contact a breeder. A good website to view with your kids is <http://stopthe77.com/>

## **Financial Costs of Owning a puppy/dog**

The initial cost of purchasing a puppy might be the cheapest part of owning a dog. Puppies/dogs can come with or grow to have some inexpensive issues or some very expensive ones. I highly recommend pet insurance.

Here is a list of some expenses: (the prices are approximate)

Puppies initial vet. visits and vaccines (3 of them) (I provide the first one) –65.00 ea.

Stool sample tests – for worms/parasites – 80.00 per test (I provide the first stool sample)

Spaying & neutering – 300.00 -600.00

Veterinary bills – unexpected or on going?

Puppy kindergarten class – 150.00

Obedience/Agility classes etc. – 150.00-200.00

Crates, toys, collars, leash, etc. ?

Pet insurance - ?

Food - 80.00 - 100.00 a month ( 30 – 40 lb bag of good quality dog food when adult, growing puppies need more)

Behaviour specialist – if needed

Doggy day care -25.00 a day

Dog walker – 20.00 per walk

Kennel – 25.00 daily, dog sitter? If traveling

Fencing – it is a requirement before puppy comes home.

Replacing items that have been destroyed - i.e. the carpet, chair, base boards etc.