

On Behalf of the Labrador Retriever Club, Congratulations on Your New Puppy!



About the Labrador Retriever

In the 19th century, an Englishman named Lord Malmesbury purchased several Labradors from Newfoundland, where they were then known as Lesser Newfoundlands or St. John's Dogs. Impressed by their highly developed retrieving instinct and their eagerness to please, he helped draw the attention of sportsmen to the breed.

Today, the Labrador Retriever is one of the most popular dog breeds in the country. Labradors excel as hunting companions, guide and assistance dogs, and substance-detection dogs. They also perform valuable search-and-rescue work and participate successfully in a variety of competitive activities, including obedience, rally, field trials, and conformation. Above all, with proper training and socialization, Labrador Retrievers make wonderful and devoted family companions.



The Breed Standard

The Labrador Retriever is a strongly built, medium-sized, athletic, and well-balanced dog bred to be an effective retrieving gun dog. Its strength and soundness allow it to work for long hours in demanding conditions, while its quality and character make it successful in the

show ring and as a family companion.

The breed is recognized by its short, dense, weather-resistant coat, distinctive "otter" tail, broad head, powerful jaws, and kind, intelligent eyes. The accepted coat colors in the breed standard are black, yellow, and chocolate.

The ideal Labrador is friendly, outgoing, people-oriented, sociable, eager to please, and responsive to training, making it well suited as both a working dog and a devoted family companion.

Being a Responsible Labrador Owner

Young Labradors need a nutritious diet provided at regular intervals, along with consistent grooming, including routine nail trimming. They also need a clean, spacious, and comfortable home, regular veterinary checkups and vaccinations, and plenty of daily exercise to meet the needs of this active breed. Most importantly, companionship, patience, and love will help your dog grow into a well-mannered companion and a strong candidate for the Canine Good Citizen program.

Crate training begins as soon as you bring your puppy home. Start by feeding your puppy in the crate and gradually introduce short periods of crating after exercise. The crate can also be an effective tool for house training, as puppies naturally prefer not to soil the area where they sleep. Successful house training takes time, patience, consistency, and a regular schedule of outdoor potty breaks.

Daily exercise is essential for Labradors. This energetic breed needs plenty of physical activity, including regular walks and, when possible, opportunities to swim. As your puppy grows, appropriate play, walks, and

supervised swimming can help burn off excess energy and keep your Labrador happy, healthy, and well-adjusted.

Obedience training should begin the day you bring your puppy home. Focus first on a reliable recall, using “come” or “here,” to help keep your Labrador safe around roads, other dogs, and people. Teaching “sit” and having your dog remain seated until released is another important foundation.

Consistent training builds good manners, strengthens your bond, and helps your Labrador become a well-behaved member of the family and community. Consider enrolling in an obedience class to learn the fundamentals together.

Health Care

Veterinary care is an important part of keeping your Labrador healthy. Soon after bringing your puppy home, schedule a veterinary exam and establish an appropriate vaccination and preventive-care schedule. Your veterinarian can also recommend protection against heartworm and tick-borne diseases. If your puppy has not already been microchipped by the breeder, have this done and register the microchip to help identify and recover your dog if lost. After the initial puppy vaccinations, regular veterinary visits will help protect against regional health concerns and detect health problems early.

A nutritious, balanced diet is essential for your Labrador’s health and development. Choose a quality commercial food appropriate for your dog’s age and needs, and be cautious of fad or grain-free diets unless recommended by your veterinarian. Maintaining a healthy weight is especially important for Labradors, as it reduces stress on their joints and can contribute to a longer, healthier life.

To Spay or Neuter

You should discuss the pros and cons of spaying or neutering your Labrador with your veterinarian. It is an important decision for the health of your dog. Studies funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation support

the delay of surgical sterilization until sexual maturity.

The American College of Theriogenologists and The Society for Theriogenology provide the following considerations:

- **The advantages** of spaying or neutering a pet include effective population control, decreased aggression, decreased wandering, decreased risk of being hit by a car, and decreased risk of mammary, testicular and ovarian cancer.
- **The disadvantages** of spaying or neutering may include increased risk of obesity, diabetes, osteosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma, prostatic adenocarcinoma, transitional cell carcinoma, urinary tract infections, urinary incontinence, autoimmune thyroiditis, hypothyroidism and hip dysplasia.

Breeding your Labrador — a Serious Commitment

Breeding a Labrador Retriever is a significant investment and responsibility. Before deciding to breed, review the Labrador Retriever Breed Standard to understand the characteristics, movement, appearance, and temperament expected of the breed. Breeders also have a responsibility to maintain healthy breeding stock and reduce the risk of hereditary health and temperament issues.

The Labrador Retriever Club (LRC) strongly recommends that owners considering breeding their Labrador follow the health testing requirements for a CHIC (Canine Health Information Center) certificate for both their dog and any potential mate. Proper health screening helps support the production of healthy puppies and promotes the long-term well-being of the breed.

The Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. (LRC) is committed to helping to ensure healthy and long-lived dogs and has funded nearly \$850,000 in research through the AKC Canine Health Foundation. Learn more about this wonderful breed and the things you can do with your dog here: www.thelabradorclub.com.