

# BUYING A DOG?

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Mastiff Rescue of Florida is rescuing more and more poorly bred English Mastiffs. Many of which come from puppy mills and back yard breeders concerned with nothing more than making money-total greed. They do not care about the dogs nor do they care about the buyer.

We have decided that a rescue must try to educate potential buyers hopefully enabling them with the research and questions to ask when buying a dog. Most reputable breeders, will be concerned where they place their dogs and also help with the transition into the new home. When dealing with a reputable breeder, most of those breeders will take back their own dogs or help the owner re-home, if the owner must at some time give up. Back yard breeders and puppy mills will not, those poor dogs will get dumped at shelters and rescues if they are lucky.

This year we have taken in 2 beautiful English Mastiff's that were blind--- after testing these dogs, we found that they had Progressive Retinal Atrophy, which is an inherited gene, meaning half of all the litters that these 2 girls produced and the back yard breeder sold will be BLIND. Totally unnecessary as this can be tested for prior to breeding. A reputable breeder would test. Unfortunately, many people will have blind dogs in the coming years from these 2 beautiful girls..the old saying, Buyer Beware!

To ensure you get a good, healthy dog, we share with you the following tips:

1. Do not buy from a pet store.
  - Most dogs sold there come from puppy mills.
2. Visit the potential breeders in person. This avoids online scams and puppy mills.
  - Check the conditions of the kennel.
  - Meet the parents of the puppies. Check and ask for their temperament.
  - Does the breeder keep old dogs? If yes, it's a good sign.
  - Is the breeder asking you lots of questions? Good breeders want to make sure they send their puppies to good homes.
  - Ask for a copy of the contract.
3. Ask the breeder for the following tests, and request written proof of the results:
  - Elbow Dysplasia
  - Thyroid
  - Cystinuria (genetic defect causing kidney issues. DNA test for genetic markers for carriers and affected dogs)
  - PRA(Progressive Retinal Atrophy an inherited progressive degenerative eye disease)
  - DM(Degenerative Myelopathy condition of the spinal column)
  - Hip Dysplasia
  - Congenital heart diseases
  - CERF(Canine Eye Registry Foundation which is a national eye registry for canine genetic eye diseases)
  - vonWillebrands Disease (inherited bleeding disorder)
  - Patella
  - CMR(Canine Multi-focal Retinopathy)

4. Ask for the AKC DNA Profile
  - A good site to research: <http://www.mastiff.org/MASTIFFHEALTH.htm>
5. Ask for American or Canadian Kennels papers.
  - Please research the following on the internet before buying:

AKC papers (American Kennel Club, <http://www.akc.org> ). Anybody can start a puppy mill or back yard breeding operation with AKC papers. It is a legitimate registry. Does not guarantee the dog is the highest quality example of its breed but does guarantee that the dog has a purebred pedigree.

CKC papers (Canadian Kennel Club, <http://www.ckc.ca/en>). Very much like the AKC. All dogs must be purebred to be registered.

ACA papers (American Canine Association). A registry for puppy mill and back yard breeders for dogs that cannot get AKC papers.

CKC papers (Continental Kennel Club). Another puppy mill/backyard breeder registry. There are no guarantees on pedigrees or being purebred.