



You can help make puppy mills a thing of the past.

What to know before getting a dog

As the global pandemic continues, the demand for dogs, especially puppies, keeps increasing. Shelters, rescues and ethical breeders can't keep up with the high demand. Thus, creating a perfect opportunity for unscrupulous breeders to profit from the situation.

We need to curb the demand to put a halt on the supply.

Before making a puppy purchase, take the time to learn about your options and weigh the pros and cons.

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

Adopting

Wherever you live in Canada, there are likely dozens, perhaps even hundreds of dogs, cats and other pets waiting right now to be adopted from an animal shelter near you. Their reasons for ending up in a shelter or foster home vary dramatically: some were lost, some were born homeless, some were rescued from abuse and some were surrendered because an owner developed allergies, had to move, passed away, could no longer afford to care for them or whose lifestyle was a mismatch with an animal's needs.

To learn more, check out [these common myths about shelter dogs](#).

Learn all about the adoption process [here](#).

[Click here](#) to find humane societies and SPCAs that are members of Humane Canada. You can also call your municipal government and ask if there is an animal shelter in your city, town or county.

[PetFinder](#) is also a comprehensive database of pets that are up for adoption from humane societies, SPCAs and animal rescue groups throughout North America. You can search for

dogs by age, breed, sex and more. *(Note: Not all humane societies and SPCAs post their adoptable pets on this website, nor do most municipally-run animal shelters.)*

Buying

Ethical Breeders

Humane Canada™ will always encourage adoption. However, if you choose to acquire a dog through a breeder, please refer to this handy list of [essential questions to ask a breeder](#) to ensure you are not inadvertently supporting a puppy mill or an international puppy broker..

If you don't take the time to carefully choose where you get your puppy, you could end up with a dog that suffers from serious medical issues or behavioural problems, causing you a great deal of heartache, frustration and expense. Worse, you could end up unknowingly supporting the cruel puppy mill industry.

Internet classified sites are not the place to look for a purebred dog. It is virtually impossible to tell the difference between a reputable breeder and a puppy mill unless you do an in-person visit. Puppy mills and backyard breeders are known to use internet classifieds to promote their business and find potential customers. Reputable breeders rely on their own websites, word of mouth and their national or regional breed clubs for referrals.

The only way you can know for sure that a breeder is responsible and humane is to visit and see first-hand the conditions their breeding dogs and puppies are kept in. Be sure you visit before you hand over any money. You'll need to ask specific questions and ask to see certain paperwork to make sure they meet the standards of a good breeder.

Reputable Pet Stores

There are many good pet supply stores that don't sell animals. And there are many stores, such as PetSmart, PJ's Pets, and Petland that operate "satellite adoption centres" for humane societies, SPCAs and rescue groups. Instead of selling cats and dogs, they house and display adoptable animals in their stores. Customers who express an interest in the animals must go through the adoption procedure via the humane society, SPCA or rescue group. By supporting these types of pet stores, you are adopting an animal, saving a life and sending a clear message to other pet stores that the humane option is to operate a satellite adoption centre rather than selling animals.

Importing

Canada has animal health requirements for the commercial import of dogs that are less than 8 months of age but it is possible that dogs bred for commercial sale may have been exposed to other diseases or parasites that are not apparent when they are imported, or where they are kept in Canada before being sold.

Before taking a dog home, you should consider asking for:

- the dog's vaccination records and other veterinary medical history

- additional information about the where the dog was located before being offered for sale
- information about policies on returns or assistance with medical bills if health issues are found after buying or adopting

Did you know that [The Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\)](#) is responsible for regulating the importation of animals, including dogs, into Canada in order to prevent the introduction and spread of diseases that could negatively impact the health of both animals and humans? CFIA veterinarians administer and enforce the humane transport and import requirements at the border. CFIA veterinarians inspect all import shipments that require a permit. They are available to provide inspection services when requested by the Canadian Border Services Agency.

Do you have it in you to bring a companion animal into your life? Don't forget that cats, rabbits and other small animals need homes too. Check with your local humane society, SPCA, municipal shelter and rescue for available adoptable animals. You may just find your perfect match!

Learn how to identify a Puppy Mill

Puppy mills (also called puppy farms) are horrendous places that churn out as many puppies as possible, in the shortest amount of time and at the lowest expense. That means terrible, filthy, crowded housing, minimal human contact, no veterinary care and unspeakable suffering.

Common features of puppy mills:

- Animals kept in crowded, filthy barns, sheds or basements
- Often, cages are piled in stacks and the waste from the upper levels falls onto the dogs beneath
- Unbearable stench of ammonia from the build-up of urine and feces
- Animals are fed the cheapest food
- Breeding dogs are bred continuously from a young age till they can no longer produce enough to make it worth keeping them
- Physical and mental suffering from long-term, extreme confinement and deprivation
- Animals receive little to no veterinary care
- No positive human interaction
- No toys, no exercise, no stimulation
- Puppies are not socialized to people, other dogs, household noises, etc.

[Learn more here](#) about how to identify a puppy mill.

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