

## Health

The health benefits for dogs and cats that have been spayed and neutered at a young age are tremendous. Problems associated with the reproductive organs are reduced or eliminated, and research shows that the cancer rate is drastically reduced. Cancer is one of the leading killers of older dogs.

## Genetic Strength

Many dogs are born with genetic faults or health problems or may carry a recessive gene for health defects. Diseases such as hip or elbow dysplasia, heart problems, blood and immune system disorders, and eye defects are passed on every day to innumerable puppies. Purebreds as well as mixed-breed dogs also inherit good and bad genes from their parents, and if both parents are carrying these genes for certain problems, the puppies' odds of getting them are increased accordingly. Before breeding your dog make sure he/she has had a thorough examination to check for any hip or elbow dysplasia, eye problems, and any other problem they might have. Bloodwork is also important, to see if anything shows up that might also be passed on to future generations.

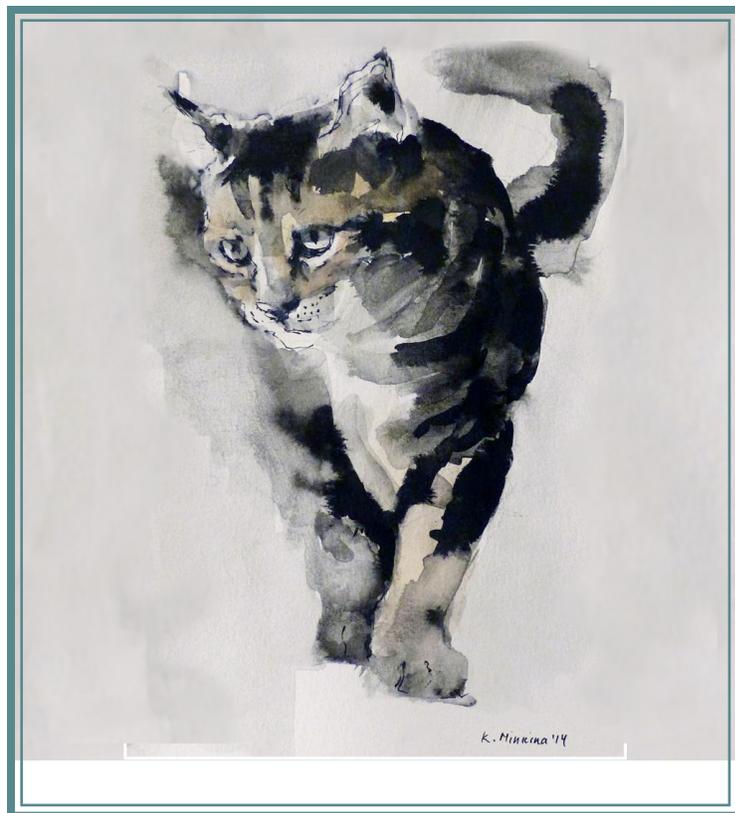


## Ability & Temperament

A dog's working instincts and trainability are also important. You want your dog to be able and willing to work for you. You don't want obedience training, household rules and good social behavior to be a constant struggle, and you certainly don't want to pass that on to future dog owners.

## Standard

The breed standard addresses intelligence, bearing, trainability and even the way a dog reacts to people. One of the benefits of purebred dogs is that, ideally, the purchasers of a well-bred purebred puppy know what they are getting: How big the dog will be, what its temperament will be (within certain parameters), and what the dog was bred to do. A standard helps make this possible so people can choose a dog that is best for them.



## Behavior

Neutering can also affect behavior. Many un-neutered male dogs escape from their yards to find a female in season down the road. This freedom is very dangerous, and dogs may end up lost or hit by cars. A neutered dog is more likely to stick close to home. This is also true for cats. Un-neutered cats are also more likely to venture off in search of a female in heat. They often get into fights and end up needing a visit to the veterinarian.

## Time and Money

This is a very important part of the decision. Ask yourself, if I breed my dog, would I have the money not only for the routine exams needed before, during and after breeding, but also for a possible emergency call should the mom or puppies become ill? What if an emergency caesarian is needed? Then, there are vaccinations for the puppies before they go to their new homes. A new litter takes time, too. A new mother sometimes needs help. Puppies may need supplemental feedings, or, if the mother doesn't have milk, bottle feedings. Do I have the time to socialize the puppies properly? And what about screening and talking to potential new owners? Would I be able to find homes for every puppy? Would I be willing to take back any puppies if the new owner couldn't keep it for any reason?

