



Dogs as pets

Life expectancy: 12 to 15 years

Time needs:

Dogs should be able to live with their human family. Generally, dogs need at least some hours of their owners' quality time daily, extended walks on alternating promenades and they should not be left alone for more than 4 hours. Dogs are unsuitable pets for fully employed persons, with the exception of jobs that allow the dog to be taken along to the workplace, where it can move about freely. Additionally, dogs are time consuming since all dog owners need to attend at least some courses in education and training. Even before deciding for a dog as pet, future dog owners need to inform themselves thoroughly by asking experienced dog owners or dog specialists as well as by reading the relevant technical literature.

Costs

Animal	300-2000 CHF	depends on the breed, size and provenience of the animal
Initial costs	500-1000 CHF	Food and water bowl, leash, collar, sleeping basket, transport box, vet costs for castration, vaccinations, (de-)worming, chipping (transpondering)
Yearly costs	ca. 1000 CHF	Depends on the size of the dog: food, dog tax (varies), regular veterinary check-ups, vaccinations and worming, stays in dog pensions during holidays.
Varia		Unforeseen veterinary costs can greatly exceed the purchase-price of the animals.

Pedigree dog or crossbreed? Puppy or adult dog? Male or female?

The advantage of pedigree dogs lies in the knowledge of how the dog will look like when adult and which basic traits of character are to be expected. Through extensive breeding, however, dog breeds are often affected by hereditary diseases. Therefore we discourage buying breeds with extreme traits such as dwarfism, very short snout, brachycephaly (big head), short legs. Caring for a puppy and watching him grow up is a very touching experience, but also very intensive and time consuming. In the first weeks and months, special puppy courses have to be attended ("imprinting" courses or play courses). Later on, education courses are compulsory. Males can develop dominant behaviour towards humans and other dogs, more so than bitches. With males, therefore, careful and consistent education is a must. Bitches come in heat twice a year. To prevent unplanned reproduction, bitches must be surveyed carefully during this time - animal shelters are full with unplanned, unwanted dogs! Ask the veterinarian about the possibilities to suppress the heat or to castrate the animal.

Where to buy, what to be attentive to?

Many dogs, puppies as well as adult dogs, await new owners in animal shelters run by local animal protection organisations. The shelter personnel gives advice on dog care, education and housing. Most shelters charge a fee for handing over the animals and set

up a contract. If a pedigree dog is what you want, visit several breeders and carefully compare the conditions the dogs grew up with. In Switzerland, there are two labels for controlled dog breeders, the Golden Quality Seal and Certodog. Puppies should only be separated from their mother and littermates at 10-12 weeks. Be careful if someone (supposedly a dog dealer) offers cheap puppies with no opportunity to check on the breeding conditions. Inadequate conditions during growing up in such mass production facilities usually lead to behavioural problems in the dogs later on.

What are the dogs' needs?

Dogs need food once or twice daily, puppies more frequently. All dogs need fresh water at any time. The dog can be fed commercial dog food, or home-made food. For the latter you should mix one part meat and one part starch-containing food. Buffalo Skin chewing items are good for teeth hygiene, but with bones there is the danger of intestinal obstruction. Depending on fur length, some dogs need intensive care for the fur not to felt. Generally, you neither need to bath the dog regularly nor to shampoo it. Keeping dogs on a chain or in the kennel is not covering the dog's need of social contact and has to be strongly objected to. Outdoor dogs also need regular contact with other dogs and humans and their daily walks. Dogs also need to have natural ground to defecate several times daily. It goes without saying that dog droppings have to be collected and be disposed of in the garbage bin. If you have no possibility to go outside the city for the daily walks, we discourage of keeping a dog. The daily walks have a far-reaching importance. They allow the dog to cover his need for exercise, to blow off steam, to explore with nose and other senses and to play, most ideally also with other dogs.

Education

Every dog needs the basics of an education. He should for example learn not to jump on persons, not to walk with the leash pulled tight, not to growl when asked off the sofa by a family member. In pet obedience schools and training courses dog owners learn how to express their intentions clearly to the dog, and to assert themselves not by force, but friendly and consistently. Undesired behaviour is usually the owner's fault, not the dog's. Dog owners have to inform themselves on the species-specific behavioural repertoire of dogs as well as modern and species-adequate training well before buying their new charge.

Veterinary care

Dogs have to be vaccinated once and wormed several times yearly. The veterinarian performs these vaccinations and thus also regularly checks on the condition and health status of the dog.

Dogs and holidays

Ideally, dogs accompany their owners on holiday trips. However, dog-friendly destinations and hotels need to be chosen. Alternately, dogs can be placed in a pension or shelter over the holidays which costs 25-40 CHF per day. Abandoning animals is forbidden and can be punished with penalties up to 20'000 CHF. Dogs should not be left alone in cars. Already in spring and even with slightly open windows, temperature in the car can rise up to 80°C - a deadly trap for the animals that leads to painful death!

Dogs and Kids

Dogs can make great companions for children. Children, however, cannot care for a dog on their own. The responsibility for species-adequate care, husbandry and education lies with the parents, who must instruct the children and supervise their interactions with the dog. Small children must never be left alone with the dog.

Information and contacts

- Information brochures, guide booklets and leaflets: „Dogs“ (german, french, italian), „Take care when buying a dog!“ (german, french), „Checklist for species adequate dog keeping“ (german, french, italian): Guidebooks by Swiss Animal Protection SAP / Schweizer Tierschutz STS, can be ordered for free by sending a post paid C5 envelope with your adress to: Schweizer Tierschutz STS, Dornacherstrasse 101, Postfach, 4008 Basel.
- Companion animal consulting service (german, french, english) and orders 061 365 99 99, Fax 061 365 99 90, sts@tierschutz.com, www.tierschutz.com (german, french, italian)
- „Children and dogs“, „Playfully from puppy to dog“, „Understanding dogs - interpreting early warning signals “ (german), Special editions of the Swiss Dog Magazine (Schweizer Hundemagazin), can be ordered for free. Just send a post paid C5 envelope with your name and adress to: Swiss Animal Protection SAP
- „No fear of big dogs“ (german, french), guide booklet suitable for children by iemt, can be ordered for free from: IEMT, Institute for interdisciplinary research of human-animal relationships (Institut für interdisziplinäre Erforschung der Mensch-Tier-Beziehung) Tel 01 388 91 44, Fax 01 388 91 45, kontakt@iemt.ch
- Certodog, Foundation for the Welfare of Dogs (Stiftung für das Wohl des Hundes), Gugelmattstrasse 36, 8967 Widen, Tel 056 631 80 18, Fax 056 631 80 18, info@certodog.ch, www.certodog.ch, Certodog dog breeder label, continuing education for dog owners
- Swiss Kynological Society (Schweizerische Kynologische Gesellschaft) SKG, Länggassstrasse 8, P.O. Box 8276, 3012 Bern, Tel 031 306 6262, Fax 031 306 6260, www.hundeweb.org (german, french). Golden Quality Label (Goldenes Gütesiegel) dog breeder label, dog obedience courses, continuing education of dog owners
- Kynologos AG, Society for applied animal behaviour research in dogs (Gesellschaft für angewandte Verhaltensforschung bei Hunden), Habersaat, 8914 Aeugstertal, Tel 01 776 11 87, Fax 01 776 11 89. The original puppy "imprinting" and play courses, continuing education of dog owners