

Are You Ready for a Puppy?

Important things to consider when getting a puppy.

Diane Morgan

Nothing is more exciting than bringing home a brand-new puppy. Its so exciting that sometimes its easy to forget everything involved. This quick quiz will help you decide if a puppy should be in your immediate future! 1. I think that bringing home a new puppy is mostly like:

- a. Buying a brand-new computer for myself
- b. Getting a stuffed toy for the kids
- c. Bringing home a baby for everyone

If you answered c, you're right, of course. Puppies are just like babies, and have all the same needs-special food, frequent meals, lots of cleanup, lots of naps and plenty of love. If you answered a or b, you're probably considering a puppy more as a toy or possession instead of a new family member. Give yourself 1 point if you answered c. 2. I expect to spend about this much money during my puppys first year:

- a. \$100
- b. \$500
- c. \$1,000
- d. \$1,500

\$1,500 (gulp) is about right when you consider the costs of food, crates, collars, vaccinations, and spaying or neutering. However, costs may vary around the country. In addition, accidents can happen. Give yourself 2 points for d and 1 point for c. 3. I don't really expect my puppy to be a grown up until it is:

- a. 5 months old
- b. 8 months old
- c. 1 year old
- d. 18 months old

Officially, puppyhood ends at a year, but many breeds mature more slowly. Don't be surprised if your puppy retains its puppyish ways long after its first birthday. Give yourself 1 point if you answered c or d. 4. I am prepared to feed a 9-week-old puppy this many times a day:

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Three

d. FourFour times a day is a good amount for 9-week-old puppies. In a couple of weeks, you can reduce the number of feedings to three. If you can't be home for at least three feedings a day, you'll need to enlist the help of a trusted neighbor or pet sitter. Just as you would not expect your child to go without lunch, your new puppy can't afford to either. Give yourself 2 points for d and one point for c.