

Congratulations on adding a new *Labrador Retriever* *puppy to your family!*



The Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. wants to help you enjoy your new canine companion by giving you some basic background information.



Introducing the Labrador Retriever

Since its inception over 60 years ago, The Labrador Retriever Club has been dedicated to preserving the integrity of the breed as a retriever gun dog that is equally at home as a hunting companion, at a dog show, or sleeping on a child's bed. Given the breed's popularity, it is remarkable the degree to which Labradors have retained their ability as working retrievers. That achievement is a measure of the health and vitality of the breed. As a new Labrador Retriever owner, we would like to provide you with some basic information about the breed and how to care for your new canine companion.

History

Despite the contradiction in name, the Labrador Retriever's origins can be found in Canada. Early in the 19th century an Englishman, Lord Malmsbury, purchased several Labradors (or Lesser Newfoundland or St. John's Dogs as they were called) from Newfoundland. He was attracted to the dogs because of their highly developed retrieving instinct and their willingness to please, and he developed a breeding program to preserve those characteristics.

From this early beginning the dog developed into the Labrador of today—one that excels in a variety of uses beyond the hunting field. The adaptability and trainability of the breed finds it utilized in many dog guide and assistance programs, as well as excelling in substance detection or search and rescue work. And, of course, with proper training and socializing, Labrador Retrievers are wonderful family companions.

Because the Labrador was a dual-purpose dog, the breed soon attracted the attention of sportsmen in this country and it came back to this continent in the early part of the 20th century. Today the Labrador Retriever is the breed with the largest number of annual AKC registrations in the United States, and it has held that position since 1992.

General Appearance

The Labrador Retriever is a strongly built, medium-size, short-coupled dog possessing an athletic, well-balanced conformation



that enables it to function as a retrieving gun dog for long hours under difficult conditions. The most distinguishing characteristics of the Labrador Retriever are its short, dense weather-resistance coat; an "otter" tail; a clean-cut head with broad back skull and moderate stop; powerful jaws; and its "kind," friendly eyes that express character, intelligence and good temperament.

The recognized coat colors for purebred Labradors are black, yellow and chocolate. No shadings in coat color are recognized for black or chocolate Labradors in either the Labrador Standard or in the current research into genetic coat colors for this breed. Unfortunately, a limited number of breeders have advertised and sold dogs they represent as purebred Labrador Retrievers with a dilute or gray coat color—hence the term "silver labs." The shadings recognized in yellow Labrador Retrievers do not depend on the presence of a dilute gene. **CHOCOLATE IS BROWN! ANY OTHER COLOR INCLUDING SILVER OR SHADES OF SILVER IS NOT ALLOWED.**

Temperament

Ideal Labrador temperament can be described as friendly and outgoing, indulgent with its peers, strongly human-oriented and tractable.

Young Dog Needs

1. Proper diet at regular intervals.
2. Regular checkups and inoculations.
3. Clean, roomy housing.
4. Daily exercise—this is an active breed.
5. Regular grooming.
6. Companionship and love.
7. Early training to become a canine good citizen.
 - Crate training
 - Puppy Socialization
 - Obedience Class

Crate Training

Crate training can be a significant milestone in a puppy's early regimen. Your puppy will learn to accept its crate happily and the crate will become a mobile "home" so there will never be a problem about where to keep your dog when you travel. Finally, should your puppy require time at the veterinarian's office because of an illness, it will not be stressed if it is placed in a crate during a hospital visit. In addition, the puppy will be much easier to house train if you confine it to a crate when you cannot observe it. Puppies do not want to soil their bed so the puppy will wait to relieve itself until you take it outside. There are many types of dog crates. They can be made of plastic, wood or wire. A collapsible wire version is often the crate of choice if it is to be used within the house or when traveling by car. The puppy cannot chew it, ventilation is good, and



it allows viewing from all sides. You can partially cover a wire crate with a blanket if you want to provide your puppy with a “den-like” environment. Airlines may require a closed (plastic) crate if you ship your dog by air. Do not allow the crate to become a substitute for valuable time spent in play and socializing.

Responsible Ownership

A key part of your responsibility as the owner of a Labrador Retriever is to make sure that your Labrador is not only trained, but also supervised. If left outside, your dog should be in a fenced yard or kennel run, not roaming the neighborhood. Loose dogs run the risk of being hit by a vehicle, causing an accident, annoying the neighbors or even being stolen. A microchip should be implanted and recorded with the recording body to improve dog identification and assist in the return of a lost dog to its owner.

Your dog should always be on lead when walking with you unless you are hunting or training. In urban and suburban areas, the responsible owner never fails to curb and pick up after his dog.

Training

Basic obedience training is an essential part of responsible dog ownership. It helps to establish a bond between you and your Labrador and makes him/her a welcome part of the family and in the neighborhood. In urban areas, there are obedience training clubs that offers classes where you and your dog can learn the fundamentals of basic obedience training. These classes can range in scope from puppy socializing to advanced training for obedience competition. If training classes are unavailable in your area, there are numerous books and videotapes that can be purchased on the subject and many are available through your local library. Early training and consistency are the keys to having a well-behaved dog. If you plan to hunt your Labrador, basic obedience training is essential.

Health Care

Veterinarian care is an important part of your responsibility in providing for your Labrador. You should have already selected a veterinarian and had your new puppy examined, and an immunization schedule set up. After the initial immunizations, your puppy should see the veterinarian on an annual basis for protection against regional health threats and early detection of debilitating disease. It is important to establish a relationship with a regular veterinarian in your area, so he or she can be contacted if an emergency arises.

A good diet is essential for keeping your Labrador healthy and strong. Most commercial foods are well balanced and palatable.

To Spay or Neuter

Not all dogs need to be bred to live a happy and fulfilled life. Spayed bitches and neutered males do not exhibit extreme personality changes by removing their reproductive capability. They often live longer and healthy lives free from cancer, uterine infections and perianal tumors. While most Labradors should

be surgically sterilized at some time during their lifespan, the sex hormones have been proven to have important health benefits. Early spay and/or neuter has been associated with an increase in size, an increased risk of some orthopedic diseases, bone cancer and some undesirable behavior. LRC, Inc. recommends that the timing of surgical sterilization involve a conversation regarding risk/benefits between the veterinarian and the owner involved. Studies funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation support the delay of surgical sterilization until sexual maturity based on a case by case basis discussion with your veterinarian.

A Breed Standard for Labrador Retrievers has been developed. It is an approved written description of the ideal Labrador; how it should move, look and act. Only Labrador Retrievers without known heredity defects or severe temperament flaws should be used as breeding stock. Because of the popularity of the Labrador Retriever, breeders have the added responsibility of maintaining healthy stock, free from hereditary defects and possessing the qualities that make this breed versatile. Raising a litter of Labradors is a serious consideration and involves a significant financial investment.

The Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. strongly recommends that any owner considering using their Labrador Retriever in a breeding program adhere to the testing listed for a CHIC certificate. CHIC, the Canine Health Information Center, lists the health testing requirements for the Labrador Retriever as OFA radiographs of hips and elbows, OFA eye examination by a board certified ophthalmologist, genetic test for EIC (exercise induced collapse) and CNM (centronuclear myopathy). The genetic test for the dilute gene *dd* is also a REQUIREMENT. The genetic test for the *pred* form of PRA is highly recommended as are the congenital cardiac examination and the advanced cardiac examination. The genetic tests all look for diseases that are inherited as a simple autosomal recessive so they can readily be controlled by testing. These tests help insure healthy companions for many years. The Labrador Retriever Club has funded over \$519,000 in canine research through the AKC Canine Health Foundation. The OFA website can answer many of your questions about health testing and health clearances.

About the *Labrador Retriever Club, Inc.*

The Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. is a nationally based club dedicated to preserving the integrity of the breed. The Club sponsors a National Specialty Event Week that includes a specialty show, obedience and agility competitions, retrieving tests and educational seminars in October of each year. In addition, the LRC, Inc. hosts two hunting retriever tests and two field trials annually, as well as publishing a quarterly Newsletter and an annual Yearbook. The LRC, Inc. also provides educational material for new owners as well as breeders and potential judges of the breed, and donates funds toward breed specific health issues.

For novices interested in training their dog for fieldwork, the LRC has an introductory program called a Working Certificate Test. A Working Certificate will be issued to any Labrador that passes the basic test requirements. The Club also sponsors a Conformation Certificate program whereby a dog is evaluated against the written Standard for the breed. Both of these programs are open to Labradors of all ages, as well as spayed or neutered animals. It is also recommend that you have your dog pass a Canine Good Citizen Test sponsored by the American Kennel Club. A list of local Labrador Retriever clubs that support similar activities on a local level can be found on our website at:

www.thelabradorclub.com

