

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW LHASA APSO

History

The Lhasa Apso originated in the isolated reaches of the Himalayan Mountains hundreds of years ago. Referred to in Tibet as *Apso Seng Kyi*, best translated as “Bearded Lion Dog,” the Lhasa’s primary function was that of a household sentinel.

In 1933, C. Suydam Cutting introduced the first Lhasa Apsos to the United States. His dogs were gifts from the 13th Dalai Lama. The breed was admitted to AKC registration in 1935 and is shown in the Non-Sporting Group.

General Information

Lhasas are a small, hardy breed, measuring about 10-11" tall at the shoulder, weighing between 12-18 lbs. The breed comes in many colors from very light blonde to black. As a puppy ages, his coat color may lighten. Black tipplings on ears and face are common features. Pigment around a Lhasa’s eyes should be black. The nose should also be black.

Distinguishing features of the breed include the coat, tail, and eyes. Parted in the middle, the Lhasa’s beautiful cloak of hair drapes over each side of the body from head to tail. The tail should be carried over the back in a screw or in a curl lying to the side. A kink in the tail is common and was once considered a sign of luck. A Lhasa’s dark brown eyes should be of medium size and oval in shape.

A slow maturing breed, Lhasas do not reach their prime until well into their third or fourth year. Lhasas age gracefully, keeping a youthful appearance and attitude well into their teens. The average lifespan of the breed is 12 to 15 years, although many have lived to be much older.



Personality

The Lhasa temperament is unique: joyful, mischievous and clown-like, as well as regal, dignified and aloof. A very independent breed, the Lhasa’s goal in life is not necessarily to please its master. Lhasa puppies are very busy, full of energy and curiosity, becoming calmer and dignified, yet still playful, as adults. Bred as indoor watchdogs for hundreds of years, Lhasas are often suspicious of strangers. They are guardians of their domain but are usually less protective away from home. To overcome the breed’s natural tendency to be wary of strangers, early socialization is critical.

Grooming

Unless the coat is kept very short all the time, the Lhasa is a breed that requires weekly routine grooming. While nearly everyone who sees a Lhasa in show coat admires its beauty, most pet owners find it more practical to keep the coat trimmed. Lhasas do not shed like other breeds. Their hair tangles and mats, making the dog miserable if the matting is ignored. In addition to keeping the coat mat-free, a regular grooming regimen is a great way to get a puppy used to being handled. It also allows an owner to become familiar with his/her Lhasa’s body, helpful in the early detection of a physical problem that may need veterinary attention. Grooming is an easily learned task and not necessarily time consuming when done regularly. However, many pet owners prefer to take their Lhasas to a professional groomer every few weeks for routine brushing and bathing.

Training

While Lhasas can be trained successfully in obedience, the breed is not a naturally obedient one. The Lhasa resists harsh or strict discipline, responding best to

positive reinforcement training. Most Lhasas will do just about anything for treats. Because they are smart, they are easily bored with rote obedience work. Training sessions should be kept short and exercises varied to maintain the Lhasa's attention. Many Lhasas prefer the challenges of agility training to the routine of obedience training.

Having keen intelligence and reasoning ability, Lhasas can be somewhat manipulative. Therefore, consistency is a crucial element in their training. If a Lhasa owner does not establish him/herself as the "leader of the pack," then without a doubt the Lhasa will assume that role!

Lhasas and Children

Lhasas generally prefer to interact with adults. They tend to be cautious and sometimes fearful of very young children who are unsteady on their feet, move quickly, and do things unexpectedly. Responsible breeders are careful about placing Lhasa puppies in families with small children. An outgoing, active puppy is better acclimated to an active household than is a quiet, timid puppy.

Parents should impress upon children that the puppy should be handled respectfully. Interactions between Lhasa puppies and young children should be *closely supervised* by a responsible adult. Children should never be allowed to tease or physically or verbally abuse the puppy. Activities that may injure the puppy, as well as chasing, teasing, or tug-of-war games that encourage a puppy to bite, should not be allowed. Hide and seek, fetch, or similar activities help young kids and puppies learn to trust each other and should be encouraged.

Spaying and Neutering

The American Lhasa Apso Club (ALAC) strongly recommends that pet owners spay or neuter their Lhasas. Neutered animals are healthier and tend to live longer. Spayed females have a lower chance of developing breast cancer and cannot develop uterine or ovarian cancer. Neutered males cannot develop testicular cancer and have a lower risk of prostate cancer. Responsible breeders sell Lhasa companion pets with spay/neuter contracts.

Health Concerns

Common health problems in the breed include KCS (Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca or "dry eye"), cherry eye, luxating patellas, renal dysplasia, and allergies. Many Lhasa owners individually or collectively support health research for Lhasa Apsos through the AKC Canine Health Foundation—a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to help dogs live longer, healthier lives. Supporting the Canine Health Foundation helps ensure a healthy future for all dogs. For more information about ongoing health research to help your breed, see www.akcchf.org or call toll-free 1-888-682-9696.



Safety

Make sure your Lhasa is identified with tags, tattoo, or microchip in case it is lost. The AKC® Companion Animal Recovery Corporation (CAR) program offers a free dog tag with recovery information and the AKC CAR 24/7 phone number with AKC Registration. Whatever the method, be sure to register the microchip, tattoo, or tag number with CAR for lifetime recovery protection. For more information see www.akccar.org, or call 1-800-252-7894.

American Lhasa Apso Club

Find more information about the Lhasa Apso by visiting the American Lhasa Apso Club's website at www.lhasaapso.org/.

Lhasa Apso Rescue

Information about the Lhasa Apso Rescue Network is available at www.lhasaapsorecue.org. The organization seeks foster and adoptive families, provides adoption information, and offers a virtual adoption option.

Lhasa Apso Resources

Links to the *Lhasa Apso Breed Standard* and ALAC's *Verbal and Illustrated Guides to the Standard* are found at http://www.lhasaapso.org/BreedStandard/breed_info.html. Books about the Lhasa Apso include, but are not limited to, the following:

Your Lhasa Apso by R. Berndt

This Is the Lhasa Apso by J. Brearly

How to Raise and Train a Lhasa Apso by P. Chenoweth & T. Chenoweth

All About The Lhasa Apso by J. Cunliffe

Lhasa Apsos: All About America's Favorite Dogs published by Dog Fancy Magazine

The Lhasa Apso: An Owner's Guide to A Happy, Healthy Pet by C. Herbel

The New Complete Lhasa Apso by N. Herbel & C. Herbel

Guide to Owning A Lhasa Apso by S. Kennedy and J. Zeppi

Lhasa Apso by D. McCarty

The Lhasa Apso by A.K. Nicholas

An Owner's Guide To The Lhasa Apso by N. Plunkett

Lhasa Apso: The Complete Owner's Handbook by S. Vervaeke-Helf

Lhasa Apsos: Everything About Purchase, Care, Nutrition, Breeding, and Diseases by S. Wehrmann and M.M. Vriends

Lhasa Apsos by S. Wehrmann and S. Vanderslip

Guide to Owning a Lhasa Apso (1996) by J. Zeppi