

Potomac Valley Golden Retriever Club is pleased to present a public information and education pamphlet:

ALL THE POOP ON PUPPIES

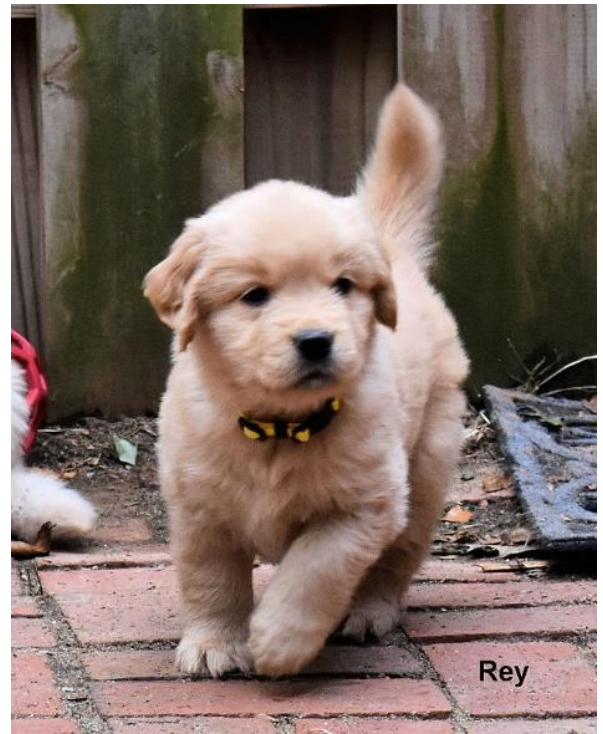
Selecting a Golden could be a decision you will live with for the next 10 to 15 years. Hopefully, the following information will help you make the right decision.

Is the Golden Retriever the right dog for you?

Golden Retrievers are wonderful; however, they are not for everyone. They are a medium-to-large breed of dogs originally bred to retrieve waterfowl and upland game birds during hunting. Therefore, once properly trained, they are at home in water and the open field, performing tasks associated with retrieval, tracking and obedience. They are athletic and energetic. Golden Retrievers are people oriented, which means they are everybody's best friend. They are known for their enthusiastic welcome, and not as a watch dog. Because they are wonderful with people, they make unusually good therapy dogs. They are excellent dogs for performing activities with "their people", whether playing catch with a frisbee or toy, participating in a wide variety of dog sports (such as agility, rally or field events), or just going on long walks. Golden Retrievers shed often and a lot – some say they shed once a year, for 365 days! They are an active dog with an oral fixation. So if you want a watchdog, a one man dog, are a fastidious housekeeper, or you do not have the time or energy to devote to a Golden, a Golden is not for you. But if you want to welcome a true dog companion into your family, a Golden Retriever may be the right fit. It is important, however, to understand the obligation that you undertake when you welcome one into your home.

Puppy or Adult?

Before you decide that you want a puppy, consider an older dog. Puppies are like babies. They demand a lot of time and attention. An older Golden often comes housebroken, socialized and trained. Contact Golden Retriever Rescue, Education and Training (GRREAT) for information about adopting an adult Golden Retriever. GRREAT can be contacted through their web site



<https://grreat.org>, by voice mail 703-620-6593, or by writing them at Post Office Box 3069, Falls Church, VA 22043

To see if any Potomac Valley Golden Retriever Club members have litters listed with our puppy referral service, email puppies@pvgrc.org.

Health Considerations:

The lifespan of Golden Retrievers is roughly 10-12 years, which is about average for all breeds of dogs of comparable size. Genetics do play a role in how long our Goldens are with us, so it is important to understand the most significant health risks your new puppy might face. Below is a short discussion of the major health issues for which there is available testing and information to guide you in your selection of a puppy.



- **Hip and Elbow Dysplasia**

Golden Retrievers are susceptible to diseases called hip dysplasia and elbow dysplasia, which are thought to be inherited. The diseases are a malformation of the hip or elbow joint. According to the American Kennel Club (AKC), the only way to know for sure if the dog has hip or elbow dysplasia is to X-ray and have the X-ray evaluated by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). The Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) also accepts an evaluation for breeding dogs performed using the University of Pennsylvania Hip Improvement Program (PennHIP) test, provided that the dog is evaluated after it is at least two years of age. Both parents should be evaluated to have “Excellent,” “Good,” or “Fair” hips, and “Normal” elbows, by OFA. Having OFA normal parents does not guarantee the pup to be free of hip or elbow dysplasia; however, the more OFA normal ancestors in the pedigree, the better the chances are for the puppy to be free of hip dysplasia. As far as your puppy is concerned, most regular veterinarians and veterinary surgeons can diagnose hip dysplasia, and elbow dysplasia can be diagnosed by most veterinary surgeons.

- **Eye Diseases**

Inherited eye diseases that may afflict Goldens include cataracts and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA), neither of which is detectable in young puppies. Pigmentary uveitis (PU), also known as Golden Retriever uveitis, is an important cause of blindness and eye pain in older Golden Retrievers. All breeding dogs should be checked annually by a veterinary ophthalmologist approved by the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists. The veterinary ophthalmologist issues a written report on each dog’s eye status. The dog’s owner can get the dog’s eyes certified, for a year, through the OFA’s Companion Animal Eye Registry (CAER).

- **Heart Disease**

Subvalvular Aortic Stenosis (SAS) is an obstruction of blood flow from the left ventricle of the heart into the aorta, the primary vessel carrying oxygen-rich blood to the body. It is the most common congenital heart disease in Golden Retrievers. The defect may increase in severity until the heart finally fails. Affected dogs may die suddenly with no previous symptoms of heart problem. The defect in SAS causes a turbulence in the blood flow which may be detected by the trained ear, as a heart murmur over the area of the aortic valve. Because this life-threatening problem is inherited, all breeding stock should be examined by a veterinary cardiologist. Puppies may also be examined. You can learn more about SAS here: <https://grca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Heart-SAS.pdf>.

- **OFA's Canine Health Information Center (CHIC)**

Besides evaluating health tests performed on dogs, OFA maintains a registry of all such tests. Using just the AKC registered name or registration number of a dog (or its dam or sire), anyone can look up the history of a dog's clearances as well as those of others in the dog's pedigree. Dogs that have established the recommended protocol for breed-specific screenings as established in cooperation with the breed parent club (for Goldens, the Golden Retriever Club of America) receive a CHIC number and certification. This is an authoritative, reliable, and easy way to check on the health of your prospective puppy's parents and relatives. You can reach OFA at <https://www.ofa.org>.



- **Cancer**

Approximately 60% of all Golden Retrievers will die of cancer. The two most common types of cancer in Goldens are lymphoma and hemangiosarcoma. Because of the prevalence of cancer in Goldens, the Morris Animal Foundation is conducting a nationwide lifetime study of over 3,000 Golden Retrievers. The study monitors virtually every aspect of the Goldens' lives, recording environmental, social, physical and health characteristics of their lives, including an extensive annual physical by specially trained veterinarians. An excellent article on cancer in Golden Retrievers is available on the website of the Golden Retriever Club of America here: <https://grca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/cancergoldens.pdf>.

- **Spay/Neuter**

One of the first things new puppy owners talk with their vet about is spaying and neutering their pet. While some vets will give an okay to spay or neuter puppies, that may significantly contribute to health problems in this breed. According to the GRCA

“Among the concerns associated with spaying or neutering prior to sexual maturity are increased risks of hip dysplasia and torn cruciate ligaments, possibly decreased life span, some evidence for increased incidence of hypothyroidism, hemangiosarcoma and osteosarcoma. On the flip side is concern that intact bitches are at risk for mammary cancer.”

The GRCA provides an excellent article on early spaying and neutering in Golden Retrievers here: <https://grca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/EffectsEarlySpayNeuterPurina1.pdf>

Selecting a Breeder:

If you have decided on getting a puppy, you must select a breeder. The increased popularity of Golden Retrievers has led to a number of poorly bred ones. So, selecting a breeder is as important as selecting a puppy. When contacting a breeder, do not be surprised when they ask questions. They are only making sure their puppies are going to the right homes. You should feel free to ask questions of the breeder. For example:

- **Do they show their dogs at American Kennel Club (AKC) or Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) events?**

If yes, in which areas?

- Breed/Conformation
- Obedience Trials
- Hunting Tests
- Field Trials
- Tracking
- Other

- **What dog clubs do they belong to?**

The previous two questions indicate how active and informed the breeder may be.

- **Which of the following genetic clearances do they obtain on all breeding stock?**

- OFA hip, elbow, eye and heart certifications
- SAS heart clearances

At a minimum, they should be able to show you the OFA hip certification, and at least a cardiologist and an ophthalmologist report for the heart and eyes. See below for more information.

- **Why did they breed these two dogs?**



What physical characteristics and personality traits do they expect from this breeding? Have the dam and sire been bred before, and if so, have they been bred to one another? What were the results? When was the last time the bitch was bred?

The previous two questions give information on how much thought was put into the breeding.

- **What do they send home with the puppy?**

They should give you:

- Shots and worming record;
- Access to the results of the puppy's first vet visit
- AKC papers (The breeder should have already registered the litter with the AKC, but you will usually have the responsibility to register your puppy individually with the AKC);
- Care and training information.



- **Do they temperament test their puppies?**

If so, what were the results for your puppy as well as for the rest of the litter? For more information, see references, Rutherford and Neil, "How To Raise A Puppy You Can Live With."

- **Will you be required to execute a contract with the breeder?**

A contract is often required by responsible breeders, and provides a number of protections for both the breeder and you the owner. It will also give you insight into the degree of concern the breeder has for the puppies that he or she has bred. The contract may spell out any guarantee the breeder provides, such as a breeder's willingness to take a puppy back (with or without a refund) and for what reasons. It may express certain expectations the breeder has for what you do with your puppy, such as AKC registration, spay/neuter, veterinary care, environmental accommodations (such as fenced yard and crate training) and health feedback the breeder wishes to receive as your puppy ages.

Owning a Golden:

When you take your new puppy home, you should have a crate waiting. See the references, Meyer, "A Pet Owner's Guide To The Dog Crate." Crate training makes housebreaking easier, brings security for the puppy, and keeps the puppy out of trouble.

Your Golden should have plenty of daily exercise, but should **NEVER** be allowed to run loose. Not only is it unfair to your neighbors, but it is **DANGEROUS** for the dog. While Golden Retrievers can adapt to virtually any living situation, they need considerable daily exercise to maintain physical and mental fitness. Your Golden should never be allowed to run free, but should be confined to a fenced yard or kennel run. Without regular exercise, your Golden may become overactive and difficult to live with.

It is also important for your Golden to get regular veterinary care. As noted above, Golden Retrievers do have some health issues that are best managed through early diagnosis, so regular veterinary visits (at least annually) are recommended. You should schedule a visit with your vet soon after taking the puppy home, to confirm the puppy's health status. At that time, you should discuss the various shots the puppy has had, and when other shots and boosters should be scheduled. You should also discuss both your feeding plans and the various approaches to parasite control (fleas, ticks, heartworm, etc.).

One of the Golden's most endearing characteristics is the trust that the dog places in its owners and handlers. That trust will earn you and your family years of pleasure and love, and a host of wonderful memories. But it carries with it a host of obligations. Before you are swayed by an overload of puppy cuteness, please consider the commitment you are making carefully. Ask more questions. Be realistic in your assessments about what you will be able to do and how much time you can commit to your dog. The life of your puppy depends on it. Above all, the love you provide to your Golden will be returned many times over.



References. For More Information:

Acquiring A Golden Retriever

Available from the GRCA Store:

<https://grca.org/shop/acquiring-a-golden-retriever/>

Introduction To The Golden Retriever

Available in the GRCA Store at:

<https://grca.org/shop/an-introduction-to-the-golden-retriever/>

A Pet Owner's Guide To The Dog Crate

by Nicki Meyer, Nicki Meyer Educational Effort, Inc.

31 Davis Hill Road

Weston, CT 06883

Available for free download at:

<http://almosthomerescue.net/docs/Your%20Dog%20and%20Crates.pdf>

How To Raise A Puppy You Can Live With

by Claire Rutherford and David Neil (1981); paperback

Alpine Publications, Inc.

1902 South Garfield

Loveland, Colorado 80537

Available at www.amazon.com.

In addition, there is an **extensive collection of information about finding a Golden and a Golden breeder**, and living and enjoying life in your new Golden household, on the GRCA website at <https://grca.org/>.

For more information on Potomac Valley Golden Retriever Club, our code of ethics, officers, committees, events, puppy referral, a downloadable membership application, and important internet links, including GRREAT, OFA, and GRCA, visit us on the internet at [https:// pvgrc.org](https://pvgrc.org)

