

WELCOME

This puppy pack has been compiled by experienced breeders and produced by the Hungarian Vizsla Club to give you general help, advice and a welcome to the Vizsla world. Your new puppy will bring you lots of joy in the years ahead. He will be a companion and reliable friend to you and your family. However this doesn't just happen; you need to put in effort too and that is where this puppy pack should help. We have assembled basic tips from bringing puppy home, the first days in his new home, to showing and sporting activities. If it stimulates you to further your ambitions there are plenty of good dog books available that can increase your knowledge and understanding.

When choosing a particular breed of dog it is important to consider the characteristics of that breed and whether or not those characteristics compliment your own lifestyle. The Hungarian Vizsla belongs to the HPR (Hunt Point Retrieve) group of gundogs and working instincts remain strong in the breed. Even when kept solely as a pet the Vizsla requires training, regular and substantial exercise, mental stimulation, and companionship. If you are not prepared to make the commitment to provide this environment the Vizsla Club would urge you to consider a less demanding pet.

FIRST DAYS.

- 1) Breed description
- 2) Getting ready
- 3) Bringing puppy home
- 4) Feeding
- 5) Housetraining
- 6) Collar and Lead
- 7) Vaccinations and Worming
- 8) Identification

MOVING ON

- 1) Puppy Socialisation
- 2) Exercise
- 3) Feeding
- 4) Chewing
- 5) General Health Care
- 6) First Aid
- 7) Activities – Fun and Competition
- 8) Useful Reading
- 9) Useful Contact Numbers
- 10) Welfare

(1) BREED DESCRIPTION

The Vizsla is a most eye-catching dog with his wonderful smooth russet coat. He stands between 22.5-25 inches (57-64cms) at the withers weighing approximately 55-66LBS (25-30kgs), the bitches being slightly smaller at 21-23.5 inches (53-60cms) weighing approximately 48-55LBS (20-25kgs).

Most importantly he is a dog without exaggerations; a medium sized medium boned dog where coarseness & bulk should be avoided.

A Vizsla should have a lean rather than fleshy head, moderately wide in skull with a moderate stop, the depression between the eyes and forehead. The foreface should taper slightly into a squared off muzzle with lips that have no tendency to being fleshy or pendulous like a bloodhound. The nose is brown. The eyes are slightly oval in shape not deep set or prominent, of a shade slightly darker than the coat colour although this can take up to two years for the colour to fully establish. A Vizsla's ears should be thin rather than fleshy, of a rounded V shape, set on moderately low and lying close to the cheeks. The head is carried on a moderately long neck, free of pendulous skin under the neck, which would give a 'houndy' appearance.

Vizslas stand on good straight legs with tight rounded feet; have a fairly broad chest with plenty of depth and a prominent breastbone. The distance from withers (the highest point of the shoulder) to the base of chest just behind the elbows should equal that to the distance from base of chest to ground. The body should have fairly well rounded ribs with a short powerful loin (waist). From the side you should see a slight tuck up to the belly. His hindquarters should be well muscled without the exaggerated angulation of say a greyhounds framework. His tail, normally docked by 1/3, should be carried horizontally when he moves. A full tail reaches to the hock and tapers to a very fine tip and care must be taken to avoid damage to the end.

His glossy coat is dense & feels greasy to the touch. Small white marks are acceptable on the chest and feet but larger marks are considered as faults.

(2) GETTING READY

When you have found a breeder with a suitable puppy, have paid your deposit and are eagerly waiting to bring him home, you can spend time getting everything ready.

The breeder should have given you an indication of the food your pup will be eating when he leaves. Buy sufficient for his first few days' meals, as it is essential you keep to this diet initially, as your puppy will have enough adjustments to make without a change of food. He will require chew proof bowls for both food and water, stainless steel is ideal but a heavy non-tip one for water will save you lots of mopping up!

Beds come in all shapes and sizes, 'scrubbable' plastic, beanbags, or soft foam. To begin with I usually advise a strong cardboard box, as long as it has not been used for chemicals nor has staples in it. The cardboard is warm, chewable, and when he outgrows it you can get a bigger one. Vetbed is a synthetic fleece very useful for lining beds, easily washable and snug to sleep on when you have just lost your family.

Collars and leads are not essential at this stage.

Your garden will have to be checked to make sure it is escape proof, and that there are no dangers in the area. For example if you have a pond make sure it is safely fenced in. Puppy must have a safe area indoors where he can't get into any harm; use an area where you can leave him unsupervised when necessary and make sure it is clear of kitchen chemicals and any electricity cables. Valuable rugs and breakable ornaments are best removed for the early weeks.

A cage or playpen can be very useful but must never be used as punishment. It should be a secure haven where the pup knows he will be safe, so use it only to confine puppy at night or when you can't watch him e.g. cooking times when he could be in danger. To begin with he may well resent the confinement but re-assure him and he will soon accept it.

(3) BRINGING PUPPY HOME.

Firstly this needs two of you, one to drive the other to take charge of puppy. Soft towels to sit him on, paper towels, newspaper and a carrier bag, in case he is travel-sick, are essential. Unless absolutely necessary do not stop on the journey home and never allow the puppy a toilet break at a busy service station or on the side of the road. Imagine his terror if he got away from you, apart from the possibility of picking up infections in such an environment. He is quite capable of travelling a few hours to his new home and much safer to wee in his secure new surroundings.

When you arrive home let him have a walk around to investigate his new area. Show him his water bowl and new bed. He will probably arrive home due for a feed but don't worry if he doesn't eat too well for the first day or two. Remember he has lost his eating chums.

Rest is essential. Young puppies need plenty of rest, so when he is tired he must be allowed to sleep. Children and visitors must not disturb him - just as they wouldn't a new baby. If he falls asleep in the middle of the floor gently put him in his bed and he will soon learn to go there when he wants to sleep.

(4) FEEDING

You should have purchased the necessary food as detailed by his breeder. It is essential that you do not change his diet but keep him to the meals he is used to. He has enough new things to get used to without his food being different as well. Remember he may well be quite picky about eating for his first few meals but this is quite normal, just encourage him and he will soon be munching his way through everything.

(5) HOUSING TRAINING

Housetraining is usually easy with Vizslas. They are a naturally clean dog, but just like a baby can't go very long between toilet breaks. If you remember to put puppy outside after meals; when he wakes up or looks unsettled; and every half-hour in between for the first few days he will quickly be clean. Go outside with him and when he performs praise him, he will then be encouraged to 'go' outside. It is an idea to put some newspaper by the back door and around his bed in case of accidents. The playpen/cage can help here, as pups don't like to dirty their own areas and will hold on and tell you they need to go. Don't leave water bowls down overnight, he will just tank up and need to wee sooner!

(6) COLLAR AND LEAD

As puppy will not be going 'Walkies' until after his inoculations, he will only require a soft collar that he can get used to. It will be strange having something around his neck so he may well object and scratch so it is important not to leave him alone in case he gets caught up on something and strangles himself. By fastening a lead and letting him drag it

around he will quickly get used to the tugs as he steps on it so that when you pick up the end to walk him he won't buck and twist but should happily follow you.

(7) VACCINATIONS AND WORMING.

Before your puppy goes out into public places he has to complete a course of vaccinations. Your Vet is the best person to give you advice on when he should be inoculated and for what, depending on particular risks in your area. Ring to book an appointment. Pups should not be taken into general surgery as the public always wants to pet them regardless that their own dog may have a contagious skin condition or kennel cough! This first visit also gives the vet a chance to look over your pup and re-assure you he is in good health. After the first jab you need to keep him secure in the garden until his second jab after which you still can't take him into public places for a further 7-10 days.

Your puppy should have had a worming course before he left his breeder. You should be given a certificate to this effect, also advising you what medication was used and when he requires his next treatments. When you give the next doses, take care to collect all excreta for 48 hours and dispose of sensibly. Strict hygiene must be observed throughout worming treatments, especially important where children are concerned.

(8) IDENTIFICATION.

By law a dog must wear a collar and identity disk in public places. This is the traditional method of identification, but nowadays you can also find puppies being tattooed or micro-chipped. 'Micro-chipping' requires the insertion of a minute data chip - with a unique, identifiable number - under the skin. It does require specialist equipment both to insert and read the chip and it tends to be that only vets/dog wardens have this equipment available. Tattooing, either in the ear or groin can be read by any one and will be identifiable by the National Register on 01206 397510. If neither of the new methods appeal to you, do make sure you have an engraved disc on his collar with your telephone number and name. More importantly never let your dog roam.

MOVING ON

(1) PUPPY SOCIALISATION

You may be lucky and have in your area classes where pups can learn social behaviour. Your vet would be a good place to ask. Pups need to learn about visitors, other dogs, how to behave in an acceptable well balanced manner and not just grow up isolated and shy of people and other dogs. They also, like children, benefit from rules so don't allow them to do something as a puppy that you won't allow as an adult. If you can't find any puppy classes, make sure that you take him out into busy areas where he can come across things he doesn't have at home. If you don't have children try standing by a school when the children come out, he will soon get used to things if he is given the opportunity to be in different situations. Never put him at risk or frighten him, always treat new things quietly and calmly and he will trust you.

(2) EXERCISE

You probably chose a Vizsla because you like plenty of exercise but do remember, a puppy - like a toddler - gets tired and it is important not to over tire a youngster. The

practice of walking him until he's tired will only have the opposite effect; he will be so wound up he won't be able to settle! A couple of exercise periods with plenty of time to recharge his batteries are best. Never take a young pup for a long strenuous walk, out jogging with you, or running beside a bike.

Over-exercise is dangerous to the correct formation of growing bones and could damage him for life by putting excessive strain on his young framework. Exercise can be gradually increased as he grows and matures. Remember if you exercise in public places that he must be under proper control and it is your duty to clean up after him if he fouls. There is nothing worse than the sight of discarded dog mess that someone is too lazy or selfish to clean up. It could also cost you a hefty fine. Always carry some plastic bags ready for scooping up.

(3) FEEDING

Your puppy came home with a diet sheet and instructions for his meals but quite quickly will need the amounts increased. What was sufficient at 8 weeks will not be at 9-10 and you will gradually increase the amounts to keep him well covered but not fat. At about 3 months he will require his food divided into 3 meals rather than 4 and at about 6 months he can have just 2 meals a day. Then he will be eating his maximum intake and this will continue until he has finished growing. A healthy dog will be fed according to condition. There are plenty of high quality feeds on the market, frozen/tinned meats, dried complete foods; the choice is yours, what ever works best for you and your dog. Just remember to make any changes gradually and always have a bowl of fresh water available.

(4) CHEWING

Most puppies chew. They need to chew to ease their gums when they are teething so it is up to you to ensure it is not your best handbag but something you have provided! Be realistic, if you leave him alone and he gets bored he will find mischief so you need to provide something to occupy his lively mind. Hide a few different toys each day so you vary his playthings. Provide a large sterilised bone or chew but if you have more than one dog make sure they don't argue over anything. My pups have grocery boxes to dig up, sit in, chew and climb on so they have lots of fun whilst keeping out of mischief. If all else fails there are plenty of chew stopping preparations and sprays to give a bitter taste to your nibbled areas.

(5) GENERAL HEALTH CARE

EYES- check daily removing any discharge with tissue or cotton wool soaked in water. Pups eyes may be runny when they are teething but any sign of infection or inflammation needs veterinary advice.

EARS - the Vizsla has a clean hair-free canal, cleaning is simple. Wipe away any dust/wax with soft tissue taking care never to poke into the ear. If required there are plenty of ear cleaners on the market. If there is any discharge, inflammation or smell, see the vet.

NAILS - check nails & if necessary trim taking care not to cut the vein. Overgrown nails are uncomfortable to walk on. If you are nervous about doing it yourself your vet will do it for you.

TEETH - hard biscuits & chews help to keep teeth clean but you can get a dog toothbrush and give a weekly clean. This is not necessary until after the 2nd set of teeth have come through and the gums have settled down.

SKINCARE - the Vizsla coat is easy to keep clean, a rubber hound glove removes the loose hair & dirt, and a soft brush flicks out the dust and gives a good shine. Bathing is unnecessary unless he has rolled in something! Shampoo removes the natural oils in his coat.

ANAL GLANDS - if your pup rubs his bottom on the grass or keeps chewing at it, it could mean his anal glands are blocked. Emptying the glands can help this; your vet will be able to show you how to do this.

FACT SHEET ABOUT MYOSITIS (muscle inflammation)

Generally the vizsla has always been considered to be a healthy breed. Responsible breeders adhere to a code of conduct which requires that they breed only from vizslas that are of sound temperament, hip-scored, physically healthy and free from known hereditary diseases.

This approach has always worked very well indeed and it has helped to ensure that a vizsla usually lives a long, strong, happy and healthy life.

From about 2004 onwards observers began to note that a number of young vizslas were succumbing to a swallowing disorder which had not previously been clinically recognised. "Myositis and Dysphagia in Hungarian Vizslas" is now the subject of a veterinary research project

The condition is still very uncommon (and your puppy is MOST unlikely to be a victim) but, for the purposes of the research project, responsible breeders are now including this fact sheet in their puppy packs so that new owners can be made aware of what to look out for (the disease is so unusual that many local vets may not recognise it either!)

The signs of our illness are problems with swallowing - both food and water - excessive drooling, and usually also muscle wasting around the head. Typical onset is usually in adolescence or maybe up to about two years of age and frequently there is an acute episode of retching, gagging, choking, dysphagia and hypersalivation. Sometimes the onset is more insidious with inefficient and messy eating and drinking being noted. Often there is an initial diagnosis of megaesophagus. Fatigue, aspiration pneumonia and a stiffness of gait are other common findings. The illness is believed to be immune mediated. With prompt diagnosis and treatment it can usually be well controlled.

The disease is more fully described on this website <http://www.vizslamyositis.blogspot.com/>

Once again we emphasise that as responsible breeders we care about the future health and well-being of our lovely breed. We are including this fact sheet for information purposes only and do not want you to worry unnecessarily. Please keep this sheet and if over the months and years to come you hear of any vizsla that has succumbed to myositis, or other immune mediated illness, then please ask the owner to contact those in the breed who are conducting the research.

Authored in March 2008 by Di Addicott 01576 202258 diane@murrayfield.wanadoo.co.uk

(6) FIRST AID

There are several good books available on treating emergencies and general first aid in the dog. I would recommend you buy one and keep it handy. It is always reassuring to have a good manual/basic knowledge book on your shelves to refer to. There are two conditions I would draw your attention to, both potentially fatal, they are heat stroke and bloat.

Heat stroke - never leave dogs in cars in the heat. Sadly, it does happen and on a warm day the temperature, even with windows slightly open, rises incredibly quickly. A dog cannot lose body heat and dies a most unpleasant death in a very short time. If you don't believe it, sit in a car in the sun yourself. It quickly becomes unbearably hot and, to put it bluntly, that heat will cook a dog - but not before it has suffered terribly first. The simple answer is not to leave dogs in cars. A dog suffering from sunstroke needs to be cooled quickly by sponging it with cool water and keeping it in the shade until veterinary help arrives.

Bloat, or gastric dilation and torsion can also be fatal. This emergency is caused by sudden build-up in the stomach of gas/fluid, the stomach twists giving symptoms of sudden stomach swelling with severe pain and collapse. The dog will die if not treated by a vet at once. Bloat is not common but can occur in larger breeds; it is thought that large feeds of dried foods, immediately before exercise are a possible trigger and it occurs mostly in dogs over 2 years old.

(7) ACTIVITIES

Obedience - of all the competitive pastimes, obedience is the most natural step. After basic obedience classes where most people take their dogs for basic behaviour, many classes have knowledgeable trainers where you can learn more advanced exercises and compete enthusiastically. The Vizslas may be in the minority against Border Collies and the Shepherd breeds but he can compete at the highest level with patience and understanding.

Agility is the race around a course, jumping obstacles against the clock event. Many clubs train owners and dogs in this as it suits a Vizsla's attitude and temperament just fine. He is naturally agile.

Showing - for fun you can try the exemption show often combined with fetes during summer, as well as pedigree classes they have several fun classes too.

If you enjoy it, find your local ring-craft club (try the library) and get some instruction. Showing is a hobby where success comes from devoting time effort and money.

If you are seriously competitive put your trust in a reliable breeder with a reputation for selling good stock, tell them you want to show. Remember win or lose you always go home with the best!

Working- the Vizsla is bred for hunting & has natural ability that can be enhanced to the highest level. From the rough shooters dog to the field trial competitor he can do the lot, his ability varies only according to your time and patience. Training classes are the place

to begin progressing to working tests. The Hungarian Vizsla Club can help with working & showing. Contact the secretary for details.

(8) USEFUL READING

THE HUNGARIAN VIZSLA by Gay Gottlieb. A complete reference book on the breed. Printed by Kingdom Books ISBN 185279104-7

DOG OWNERS HOME VETERINARY HANDBOOK by D.G.Carlson & J.M.Gifin. Published by Howell book house.

HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES by G.Macleod MRCVS DVSM. Published by Daniels.

(9) USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Your Breeder

Your Vet

Vizsla Club Secretary 01908 373 097

Kennel Club 0171 629 5828

Kennel Club Registrations 0171 493 6651

Animal Health Trust 01638 661 111

Countryside Alliance 01719 284 742

Blue Cross 0171 835 4224

RSPCA 01403 64181

National Canine Defence League 0171 837 0006

PDSA 01952 290 999

Dogs Home Battersea 0171 622 3626

Dogs Home Birmingham 0121 643 5211

Dogs Home Wood Green Essex 0176 383 8329

Dogs Home Lothian Scotland 0131 660 5842

National Tattoo Register 01206 397 510

(10) Welfare

Sadly to say, on occasions, Vizslas sometimes need to be re-homed and the Vizsla Welfare takes on this daunting task. Sometimes, through no fault of their own, and occasionally from homes that have failed to tune in to the Vizsla frequency, dogs will need to be found new caring homes by the welfare co-ordinators.

If you could help, or know someone who would be interested in giving assistance, our welfare co-ordinator would be delighted to hear from you. She is:

Mrs. Sue Milson (Tonbridge in Kent) 01892 834178

This article has been written by Liz Harper & produced by Peter Barlow

If you have downloaded this article and found it useful, a donation to Hungarian Vizsla Welfare would be very much appreciated.

Donations should be sent to:

The Hungarian Vizsla Club Welfare
c/o Mrs Sue Milson
The Oak Tree Bungalow
Five Oak Green Road
Five Oak Green
Nr TONBRIDGE
Kent TN12 6RL