



Southside Animal Hospital

929 South Hill Street
Griffin, GA 30224
770-228-2595



Selecting A New Pet

When you are selecting a new pet, this is a major decision. You are making a commitment that can last for 20 years or more. You need to evaluate if you are financially able to take care of your pet, if you have the time to devote to your new pet, and what kind of pet you want.

Cat or Dog

The first decision is whether you want a cat or a dog. Both pets are very different from each other. A cat is generally more self-sufficient, independent, and require less training than a dog. Cats require a little less daily attention than dogs and do well in apartment situations. Dogs are generally more loyal, more playful, and can be involved in larger variety of family activities than a cat. Dogs also have a much larger variety of in size, physical characteristics, and temperament.



Specific Breed or Mixed Breed



With both cats and dogs, there are specific breeds you can get. Some of the benefits of getting a specific breed are that you can have a better idea of temperament of the pet, medical problems they may face or you may want to avoid, and you can obtain physical characteristics you may desire in a pet. Some of the advantages of mixed breed animals are that they cost less, they sometimes avoid common health problems of specific breeds, and they are often available from rescue organizations.

Desired Characteristics

Grooming - How much grooming do you want to do? Do you want daily brushing? Do you want to visit a groomer? Do you only want to do occasional bathing? In general the longer the hair, the greater the care that will need to be provided.

Activity Level - How active do you want your pet to be? Do you want a pet to play ball with? Do you want a pet to run laps or go hiking? Do you want a pet to work in some way (herding, hunting, competition, ect.)? Do you

want a pet to rest on the couch with you? Do you have appropriate exercise space for the pet you desire?

Size - How big a pet do you want? Do you want a small pet to lay in your lap? Do you want a big pet to play fetch with? Do you have sufficient space to keep a pet the size that you desire?

Potential Problems - What potential medical problems are your desired pet prone to? What potential behavioral problems are your desired pet prone to? Are you willing to work with those if they arise? Are there tests that can be run to try to avoid them? If you have children around, is your desired pet good with children?



Finding a place to get your pet

See and Evaluate the pet's environment - The goal is to avoid a pet from a puppy or kitten mill. You want to get a pet from a reputable breeder who cares about all the individual pets they have and the health of each pet. Avoid breeders who have 2 or more breeds. Each pet should have a name and seem to be cared for. Each animal should be treated as a pet, and not number. The animal areas should be clean and neat. The pets should seem friendly and socialized. Most reputable breeders will give you a time frame to get the pet examined by a veterinarian and allow you to return the pet if a problem is found on a timely examination.

See and Evaluate the temperament of the parents - When getting a new pet, you should be able to see at least one of the parents of a young pet. This may not be possible with adults or rescue pets. Look at the parent and see if the pet has a good temperament. Most of a pet's temperament is inherited. Aggressive or fearful animals often have aggressive or fearful offspring. The parent or parents should seem to have even temperaments without being aggressive or overly fearful. If you have children, this is extremely important to evaluate.



Know and ask about common health issues - If you do choose a specific breed, be sure to research and know what

health problems are common to the breed. Know if there are tests that can be performed on the young pets or parents that limit the possibility that your new pet will be affected. Make sure that you ask the breeder specifically if any of these problems have been seen in their dogs, or if they have had any of these tests performed. In mixed breed dogs, make sure to ask the owner or rescue if this pet has had any health issues and if these will be on-going issues.