

Congratulations on your new Akita!

The Akita is an intelligent, loyal companion but it requires time, training and socialization. To help you provide the best care for your Akita, we encourage you to participate in the parent club, regional clubs or on-line chats. The following options are available to every Akita fancier.

JOIN A CLUB

The Akita Club of America was established in 1956 and is the AKC licensed member club of the breed in the United States. The ACA's stated goal is "to do all things possible to advance the best interests of the Akita breed and to strive for better care, control and breeding practices."



The **ACA** publishes several brochures about the Akita covering its history and its future. These brochures are available to you free of charge or at a nominal cost.

"**Akita Dog**" is the quarterly membership newsletter published by the ACA and filled with good information to keep you updated on the breed and club activities.

Membership in the ACA is a good way to pursue your interest in the breed. Areas of interest with active involvement of its membership include conformation and obedience shows, agility trials, genetics and hereditary problems, plus rescue and public education.

Within the ACA there are affiliate regional clubs. Regional clubs consist of local Akita fanciers whose common bond is a love for the breed. Experienced Akita owners are an important reservoir of information for all things "Akita." Regional clubs offer puppy fun matches, obedience trials, and specialty shows. They provide educational information, assistance, and camaraderie in your local area. Health clinics are another benefit sponsored by local clubs and offer an opportunity to have your Akita tested for various health clearances at a reduced cost. A list of Regional clubs throughout the U.S.A. is available from the ACA. If a regional club is unavailable in your area, the ACA can give you a list of individual Akita contacts that can be very helpful in answering your questions.

TRY THE INTERNET

If you have access to the Internet, you'll enjoy meeting people and learning more about Akitas on one of the many Akita lists. Do a search on your favorite search engine or try **HYPERLINK** <http://www.yahoo.com>.

RESCUE

Purebreds, including the popular Akita, do end up in shelters. The numbers continue to rise. Looking at your puppy you cannot imagine any Akita being homeless but Akita rescue groups are filled with purebred Akitas.

Sadly, people assume that any dog with AKC papers is automatically eligible for breeding. AKC registration is not a guarantee of your Akita's health or quality. Even an Akita with several AKC champions in its pedigree may not be a candidate for breeding. Breeding is a serious responsibility. When a "breeder" with a pair of dogs produces litters simply for money or because they believe all purebred dogs should be bred, the resulting puppies are often sold or given away to the wrong homes. Akitas are not suitable for all homes.

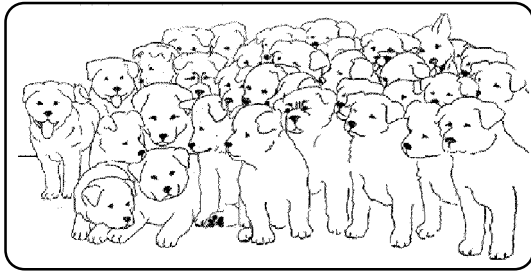


The alternative is spay or neuter. There are several health benefits to spay/neuter. Early spaying of female dogs greatly reduces the risk of mammary cancer as well as eliminating other reproductive cancers. Having a female in heat means dealing with the mess of a bleeding female. Problem pregnancies are very expensive. Neutering a male reduces the incidence of prostate enlargement, and testicular or prostate cancer later in life. A common myth is "it will make him a sissy." Although, neutering at an early age removes some of the Akita's sex motivated territorial aggression and reduces the urge to roam the neighborhood, your male Akita will remain a male and your female will retain her feminine traits -- they will both be more affectionate with your family. Another benefit of an early neuter is eliminating the need to mark his territory with urine, both inside and outside! Most important, you won't contribute to Akita population issues that currently exist.

BEFORE YOU BREED

If you plan to breed a litter, the first step is an honest comparison of your Akita to the Akita Breed Standard. Obtain a copy from AKC, **ACA** or **ACA's** web site (see back cover). Visit local dog shows to see Akitas in conformation. One of the best ways to judge the quality of your Akita is by competing for an AKC Championship title.

Genetically transmitted diseases are an issue of concern for responsible breeders. You are strongly urged to investigate and use the recommended genetic screens and health checks **BEFORE** breeding. Some of these are OFA registries for hips, elbows and patellar luxation. OFA now offers a clearance for hypothyroid disease, a common problem in Akitas. CERF registers eyes clear of PRA, cataracts and glaucoma.



The responsible breeder remains in touch with the families, guiding and assisting their puppy buyers through all phases of the dog's life. A big responsibility, to be taken seriously.

HEALTH-GENETICS

The ACA is participating in the AKC's Parent Club Partnership Program that provides assistance to Parent Clubs attempting to resolve serious health problems. Currently underway at various research universities are research grants covering bloat, Sebaceous Adenitis, Myasthenia Gravis, VKH, PRA and Pemphigus.

DNA collected from hundreds of Akitas is the key to success in these studies. Once the marker genes (the direct cause of inherited disease) are located, testing can be developed that will provide breeders with the means to eliminate these genetic diseases from their breeding programs. Every Akita owner is encouraged to participate.

TEMPERAMENT - TRAINING - RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP

Akitas attract attention with their size and majestic beauty, but owning an Akita is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. When you invest time in training and socialization, while learning as much as possible about the breed, your Akita will develop into a well-adjusted adult.

The Akita's basic temperament ranges from lovable and calm to bouncy and aggressive. They have strong guarding instincts. Though known to be a quiet dog (in Japan they are called the "Silent Hunter"), they will sound the alarm when an intruder or stranger enters their territory. Guests that are welcome when you are home may not be welcomed by your Akita when family members are away. The Akita is resolutely loyal to his household ties. This loyalty to family can result in overzealous behavior with visiting children. An Akita may misinterpret children's playfulness as a threat to their own child and act protectively.

As a breed, they are not the easy-going child's playmate that delights in endless play or teasing. Some Akitas are not tolerant around any small children. Caution with a large dog like an Akita around small children is common sense.



Most Akitas have powerful hunting instincts around other animals. For this reason, Akitas should not run free. Most Akitas are born "pack leaders." This trait means an Akita will challenge another dog resulting in combative skirmishes if an owner is unprepared. The Akita has a strong urge to be dominant therefore, dogs of the same sex usually are in conflict with each other when they reach sexual maturity.

These big dogs are playful-downright silly at times-and love to romp. Above all else, they thrive on human companionship. Most will kennel and crate easily if trained as puppies. Obedience-wise, they can be willing to please as well as stubborn. They have a mind of their own and are extremely intelligent. For this reason, basic obedience at a young age is vital for control as an adult.

Akitas are cat-like in their love of grooming to keep themselves clean. They are odorless making their presence in the home a pleasure at all times. So many endearing qualities can make you overlook the twice yearly profuse shedding of their undercoat. Daily brushing makes the process bearable for you and your Akita. They are hardy and adaptable but you must provide good shade/shelter and lots of fresh water if your Akita will be spending time outside in a securely fenced yard.

IDENTIFICATION OF LOST PETS

Should your Akita become lost, the best insurance for its safe return is identification. Affix identification tags to a buckle collar and leave that on your Akita at all times. For permanent identification, consider the "Home Again" recovery network database maintained by the AKC. This program consists of an encapsulated microchip inserted under the skin at the back of the neck. The chip contains information identifying your dog and you, the owner, plus an 800 phone number to the AKC database. Nearly all animal shelters now have scanners to read these chips. The insertion procedure, available at most veterinary offices, is simple and painless.

AKC VENUES FOR COMPETING WITH YOUR AKITA

Although conformation is the most widely known competition sport for dogs, there are several other sports open to our breed. Obedience, tracking and agility develop tremendous bonding between dog and handler during training. Skillful teamwork and mutual respect is essential to good performance in these very exhilarating sports. Spayed and neutered dogs can participate in these AKC venues, unlike conformation which requires dogs to remain sexually unaltered.

AKC has a vast resource of information pamphlets and videos available. See AKC's web site for a complete listing of available material: <http://www.akc.org> or contact them at customer service offices: Raleigh (919) 233-9767

Once again, congratulations and welcome to the breed. The following lists will open doors to information to better help you become a responsible Akita owner.

ACA PARENT CLUB CONTACT Akita Club of America
9337 B Katy Freeway #150
Houston, TX 77024

ACA's INTERNET SITE <http://www.akitaclub.org>

AKC HOME AGAIN MICROCHIP INFORMATION
Raleigh (919) 233-9767 New York (212) 696-8200 <http://www.akc.org>

HEALTH REGISTRIES

OFA	CERF
Orthopedic Foundation for Animals	Canine Eye Registration Foundation
Hip, Elbow, Patella, Thyroid	West Lafayette, IN
Columbia, MO	(765) 494-8179
(573) 442-0418	http://www.vet.purdue.edu/~yshen/cerf.html
http://www.offa.org/	