



Companion Animal Protection Society

## Why You Shouldn't Buy That Puppy in the Window

Pet shops usually buy their puppies from brokers. These brokers get their animals from puppy mills – commercial breeding establishments that mass-produce dogs for resale. Most puppy mills and brokers are in the Midwest, Pennsylvania, and New York.

- Neither puppy mills nor pet shops properly socialize their puppies. They raise their puppies in tight and often cramped dirty cages – not warm, home-enriched environments.
- In these conditions they lack the benefits of fresh air, exercise, play with lots of positive human contact – all of basics every puppy needs to be able to grow into a well-adjusted adult dog.

Unsound puppy mill breeding practices predispose puppies to both painful hereditary medical and physical afflictions such as: hip dysplasia, luxating patellas (dislocating kneecaps), eye maladies, and aggressive behavior. Life-threatening genetic conditions, such as liver and heart diseases, autoimmune disorders, and seizures can also result from careless breeding. Many genetic defects may not show up for months or even years.

- Pet shops usually do not provide information on common genetic disorders prevalent in certain breeds – such as hip dysplasia found in German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, and Golden Retrievers.
- Pet shops do not provide copies of these important health certificates: Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) on the hips of both parents; the Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF) on the eyes of both parents.

Pet shop and puppy mill puppies are often exposed to numerous animals at puppy mills and brokerage facilities; during transportation by truck, van, or airplane; and ultimately at pet shops. As a consequence, these puppies are commonly exposed to a variety of illnesses. Moreover, the stress from transportation makes them even more susceptible to disease.

- Pet shop puppies commonly develop worms and contract upper respiratory infections, ear and eye infections, mange, coccidia or giardia. Some of these maladies can be transmitted to humans.
- Pet shop puppies are prone to parvovirus and distemper. These diseases are highly contagious and usually fatal. Parvovirus symptoms are not immediately detectable, so a puppy with parvo may share a cage with a healthy puppy and spread the disease.
- Pet shops normally place very sick or deformed puppies in isolation – usually a depressing back room. These already compromised animals are held in conditions with poor air circulation and their germs are spread throughout the store.
- While some puppies seem healthy in the pet shop, their disease symptoms sometimes do not appear for several weeks – when they are already in a new home.
- Puppies frequently die or require euthanasia at puppy mills, brokers' facilities, and pet shops.

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## Why You Shouldn't Buy That Puppy in the Window (Continued from page 1)

Pet shops do not screen their buyers. Their business depends on impulse buyers – many pet shops are in malls or shopping strips – who know very little about dogs. Impulse buyers may not have the proper environment for raising a puppy. Pet shops rarely ask any of the following necessary questions:

- Will someone be at home during the day?
- Do you live in a house or an apartment?
- Will a dog be allowed indoors, especially at night?
- Do you have a fenced yard?
- Do you have the time required to exercise a dog?
- Do you have children or other animals?
- Do you understand that a dog will be a member of your family for ten years or more?
- Have you had dogs before, and if so, what were your experiences with these dogs?
- Do you have a veterinarian, or do you need a referral?
- Are you prepared to pay for professional grooming if you adopt a dog that needs these services?

Pet shops charge exorbitant prices for puppies – financing is usually available – and earn huge profits because of substantial markups. For example, an eight-week-old Labrador Retriever from a pet shop can easily cost around \$1,000. If you see a pet shop dog selling for \$300 or less, chances are it is more than three months old and has been sitting in a cage for a least a month.

- Pet shops treat puppies as merchandise that can easily be returned for an exchange or credit toward another dog. Most customers, though, become attached to their puppies and will not return them.

- New owners can incur large veterinary bills. Most pet shop warranties, however, preclude reimbursement for veterinary expenses unless there is a state lemon law.

Pet shops are anxious to sell animals because they want to sell pertinent supplies. As a rule, they do not provide the following essential information:

- The significance of spaying or neutering animals
- The benefits of obedience training
- The correct ways to deal with puppy teething

Every year, animal shelters destroy millions of dogs – including purebreds and puppies – and cats. PLEASE adopt a companion animal from your local shelter, humane society, rescue organization, or veterinarian. In addition, many pet supply stores, such as PetSmart® or PETCO sponsor adoption days. You can also find animals to adopt at [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com), [www.pet-ark.com](http://www.pet-ark.com), [www.adoptapet.com](http://www.adoptapet.com), and [www.pets911.com](http://www.pets911.com).

*Founded by President Deborah Howard in 1992, Companion Animal Protection Society (CAPS) is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to protecting companion animals from cruelty in pet shops and puppy mills. CAPS actively addresses the abuse and suffering of pet shop and puppy mill dogs through investigations, education, media relations, legislative involvement, puppy mill dog rescues, consumer assistance and pet industry employee relations.*