

Questions to Ask a Breeder

1. Does the breeder own both the parents? Do they have any knowledge about the health of the grandparents?

Why ask – the more knowledge the breeder has of the dogs immediately related to the puppy, the more thought they are likely to have given to the breeding. It is normal for the breeder not to own the sire but make sure they know everything about him.

2. Are the puppies allowed with the mum?

Why ask – the mum teaches puppies nearly all of the social skills they need in life. A puppy separated from its mother early on is more likely to show signs of nervousness or even aggression.

3. Does the breeder have permission to breed from both the parents of the puppies?

Why ask – if the breeder cannot register your puppy with the Kennel Club it is likely that they do not have permission to breed from the parents. This could be because they have not passed health tests or the female has already had too many litters.

4. Can the breeder show health certificates for both parents? Alaskan malamutes used for breeding stock should (as a minimum) have a clear eye test for hereditary cataracts, a polyneuropathy clear test result and a total hip score of below 13.

Why ask – breeding from dogs without the appropriate health tests can increase the likelihood of your puppy developing illness later in life that will not only be costly but also cause the animal distress and discomfort.

5. Do the dogs in the breeder's kennel have plenty of space to live and for exercise?

Why ask – malamutes fall into the 'working breed' category. Whilst they can be happy having sofa time with you they need a good amount of exercise and space to keep not only their body, but their minds active too.

6. Is the breeder keeping any puppies?

Why ask - are they breeding just for money? If they don't like the puppies enough to keep one did they really think through the breeding plan they just executed?

7. Do the dogs in the breeder's kennel live with companions or are they kept isolated?

Why ask – if you are looking for a family pet or a good working dog then your malamute needs to have a good temperament. An isolated dog can generally indicate poor social ability in a dog. Remember there are exceptions to the rule such as injured dogs, older dogs that need some quiet time and bitches that have just had puppies.

8. If the female dog has young puppies does she have a quiet, clean space to care for her young?

Why ask – clean kennels, good quality food, space and good socialisation all contribute towards buying a puppy that's had a great start in life. Look for the obvious signs and if you're not happy then walk away.

9. Does the breeder take part in any activities within the malamute community e.g. running, weight pull or showing?

Why ask – this is often a sign that your breeder is knowledgeable about the Alaskan malamute and hasn't just selected a popular breed of dog to make money from. They will be able to offer you a lifetime of support and advice if you need it. Many breeders are rightly very proud of their kennels achievements so encourage them to show you memorabilia such as photos, rosettes and certificates.