

A Word of Caution

Despite the difficulties involved in obtaining a puppy from a reputable breeder, buyers should be cautious of internet, social media and magazine advertising. By responding to these ads, you run the risk of buying from irresponsible breeders (*a.k.a. Producers*) whose only interest is profit. Once the puppy is sold, you are forgotten. In another scenario, you could fall victim to foul play, where you leave a deposit for a puppy that doesn't exist, and then the seller disappears. If you decide to go down that road, be careful.

Red Flags Common to Unreliable Sources *(courtesy of Humane Canada)*

An unreliable breeder/producer ...

- does not require that you visit the kennel and the dogs.
- requests a down payment.
- boasts that the litters are registered with the Canadian Kennel Club. While breeders of purebreds should, indeed, register their dogs with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC), this alone does not guarantee that they treat their dogs humanely, or do any medical screening. It simply means that the registered puppy is the offspring of two dogs that are both also registered as being purebred of the breed in question. Registration happens by mail, and the CKC does not monitor or inspect the breeding facilities of its members, or of the breeders who register their puppies with the club.
- doesn't inquire about your past experience with dogs, your lifestyle, your housing status, your family, and the like. Such breeders may offer to deliver a puppy to you, or meet you in a public place to hand it over. They might initially talk about you coming to pick up the puppy, but then, at the last minute, suggest saving you the trouble and meeting you at some other location.
- produces puppies of many different breeds.
- requires that you send money to another country.
- upon visiting a kennel, brings the puppy to you so that you don't see the mother, littermates, or where the dogs are kept. Keep an eye out for barns and sheds at such locations, as that could be a sign of mass dog breeding.
- doesn't know anything about the typical genetic disorders of the breed, and doesn't have the dogs screened by veterinary specialists or have specific breed testing done prior to any breeding. For a full list of breed testing, please go to the [Orthopedic Foundation for Animals](#) (OFA).
- doesn't provide a health guarantee for the puppy, and there is no requirement that the puppy be returned if the buyer decides not to keep it, for whatever reason.

Hallmarks of a Good Breeder *(courtesy of Humane Canada)*

A reputable breeder ...

- offers dogs of only one or two breeds, and does not have a larger number of animals than they can reasonably provide with a good quality of life.
- requires that you visit and will allow you to meet and interact with their dogs (including the mothers), and see where they are housed.
- has facilities that are clean and spacious. Their dogs are healthy and well socialized.
- keeps puppies clean, warm, and well-fed, and allows them to remain with their mothers until they are fully weaned.
- does not allow puppies to go to new homes before 10 weeks of age.
- raises their puppies in the home where they can become accustomed to household sounds, like the phone, dishwasher, vacuum, comings and goings, etc.
- is a member of the **relevant** Breed Club and the National Kennel Club (*in Canada, this is the Canadian Kennel Club*), and adheres to both bodies' Code of Ethics Code for Breeders.
- is very knowledgeable about the breed and asks you many questions, to ensure your lifestyle, knowledge of dogs and attitude are a good fit for an IW puppy.
- will talk openly about breeding programs and practices.
- has working knowledge of genetics and will talk to you about genetic disorders that are prevalent in the breed, and any work being done to prevent them.
- screens all breeding stock for relevant genetic disorders and removes affected animals from the breeding program. Affected animals are spayed/neutered and may be placed as companion animals, as long as health issues are disclosed to buyers/adopters.
- takes a lifetime pledge of responsibility for the dogs that he/she breeds and their progeny, and will take back any animal that he/she has bred, at any time, at any age, and for any reason.
- does not breed females younger than 2 years of age, nor does consecutive breeding with the same female.
- stops breeding any female dog once it has delivered 3 to 4 litters.
- provides ongoing guidance and support to puppy buyers.
- provides a contract that spells out both the breeder's and the purchaser's obligations and responsibilities.
- provides a health and temperament guarantee.
- provides puppy buyers with proper paperwork, including a bill of sale, Canadian Kennel Club registration papers, vaccination certificates and copies of genetic screening clearances for the sire and dam (*father and mother*) of the litter.

Advice for the Prospective Buyer

- Personally meet breeders and view the premises. Reputable breeders will rarely sell puppies without meeting prospective buyers. Some may require a home visit to assist you in preparing for an Irish Wolfhound puppy.
- Check, when viewing a young litter, that bringing children and/or extended family is acceptable.
- Confirm that these five essential health checks for Irish Wolfhounds have been completed: the puppy's parents have been heart, eyes, elbows and hips tested before breeding, and the puppy has been tested clear of Portosystemic Shunt.
- Do not expect the breeder to let puppies go to their new homes until, at least, the age of 9 to 10 weeks.
- Watch the interaction between the puppies and their mother, and ask to see where the other hounds are living, if applicable. A reputable breeder will be happy to show you.
- Expect to be provided with the following before leaving with your puppy:
 - a written receipt for the puppy. Carefully read and understand any conditions imposed by the breeder. The breeder may require you to agree to and sign a non-breeding contract..
 - the veterinary certified health and vaccination record for the puppy
 - copies of the heart, eyes, elbows and hips tests of parents, which should be rated as "Normal, Good or Excellent," and liver shunt test results of the puppy, which should be "Clear."
 - a current diet sheet, preferably with a few days' supply of their current dog food.
 - registration papers, should your puppy be registered with the Canadian Kennel Club or any foreign national registration body. These documents may be given either on the day that you take your puppy home, or you may receive them a few weeks later, once the breeder has had the chance to input all of your information on the registration forms, and submitted them to the CKC or the pertinent foreign body.
 - specific written instructions and requirements concerning Irish Wolfhound exercise and nutrition, from puppyhood to adulthood.