## 10 Breeder Questions You Must Ask

Use this checklist when speaking with breeders to make sure you're making an informed and ethical decision. A responsible breeder will be happy to answer these questions openly.

1. Can I meet the mother and possibly the father (and ideally the litter)? Ideally see at least the mother interacting with the puppies also.

2. What health tests have the parents had, and can I see the results?

3. Have the puppies been seen by a vet? Are they microchipped and vaccinated?

4. What kind of socialisation have the puppies experienced so far?

5. Can I see where the puppies are being raised (home vs kennel)?

6. What support do you offer after the puppy goes home?

7. How old will the puppies be when they leave? (Should be 8+ weeks)

8. What do you feed the puppies, and can I have a transition plan?

9. Can I have references from previous puppy buyers or your vet?

10. Are you part of any breed clubs, associations, or health initiatives?

## Breeder Red Flag Checklist – What to Watch Out For

Use this checklist to spot common warning signs that a breeder may be unethical, irresponsible, or part of a puppy farming operation. Trust your gut — if something doesn’t feel right, walk away.

**❌** Red Flags to Watch Out For:

**🚩 The mum isn’t present**

* Excuses like “she’s out for a walk” or “she doesn’t like strangers” are common cover stories. The mum *should* be there with her pups, and you should be able to observe her behaviour and health.

**🚩 Paperwork is “missing” or will be sent later**

* No vaccination cards, microchip details, or registration paperwork on collection day is a huge red flag. Reputable breeders have these ready and organised.

**🚩 More than one breed or multiple litters on-site**

* This may suggest commercial breeding or puppy farming. Good breeders usually focus on one breed and only have a litter occasionally.

**🚩 No questions for you**

* Ethical breeders will ask *you* questions to make sure their puppies are going to the right home. If they’re just trying to make a sale, be cautious.

**🚩 The pups are available “now” and there’s pressure to buy quickly**

* Responsible breeders don’t rush you. They want to meet you properly and may even have a waiting list.

**🚩 The price seems suspiciously low – or too high for a crossbreed**

* Cheap often means corners have been cut. Overpriced “designer” mixes with no health testing can also be a red flag.

**🚩 No vet checks or vaccinations given**

* All puppies should be seen by a vet at least once before going home. If they haven’t — ask why.

**🚩 You’re not allowed to visit the home or only meet in a car park/third location**

* This is a massive red flag. Always see where the puppy was raised.

**🚩 They avoid letting you meet the whole litter**

* You should see how the puppies interact with each other. Is one kept in a different room? Are the pups unusually quiet or lethargic?

**🚩 They can’t show you health testing results for the parents**

* For pedigree dogs, health testing is essential. You should be able to see proof, not just be told “they’re healthy.”

**🟡** Gut Feeling Check:

* Do you feel comfortable and respected?
* Are they open and willing to answer questions?
* Does the environment seem clean, calm, and appropriate for raising puppies?
* Do the puppies seem confident, curious, and healthy?

If you’re ticking a lot of “no” boxes — **walk away.** You are not “rescuing” the pup — you’re funding the problem.

✅ **Positive Signs of a Good Breeder** (for balance):

* The mum is present and relaxed with her pups
* Clean, safe environment
* Puppies are alert, playful, and curious
* Vet records and microchip details are ready to view
* Breeder asks *you* lots of questions
* Health testing paperwork is available
* Happy to keep in contact for post-sale support
* Willing to take the puppy back if needed

Remember: a good breeder wants the *right* home — not just a *fast* home.