

Irish Water Spaniel Fact Sheet

Congratulations!!!! You are now the proud owner of a beautiful Irish Water Spaniel puppy! This fact sheet has been provided to help you better understand the needs and requirements of this rare breed. More detailed information is provided in this book. The primary goal for all of our puppies is that they are placed in homes where they will be a loved and cherished family member for their entire lives. Irish Water Spaniels want to be around their people and need to be family members. They are not suited to outdoor living. Our puppies must be raised as indoor dogs.

Irish Water Spaniels are members of the Sporting Group, and as such require a fair amount of exercise. An hour or so a day of fast paced activity such as brisk walks, fetching a ball, hiking, swimming, etc. should be sufficient to keep your dog in good physical condition. If you're looking for a "couch potato" this is not the breed for you! Dog activities such as obedience, agility, dock-diving, tracking and field work, are all great activities for adult Irish Water Spaniels. But please note, activities that require a constant strain or consistent pounding on the joints, such as jogging with your dog on hard pavement, extended lengths of time catching Frisbees or chasing tennis balls, should be strictly avoided until the puppy is at least 18 months old. Failure to do so can lead to bone spurs, stress fractures, arthritis, and/or hip dysplasia.

The first thing we'd like to stress is socialize, socialize, socialize. Irish Water Spaniels can be shy if they are not well socialized at a young age. Your puppy has been exposed to many, many things, and many, many people, as much as has been possible to this point. However, as he goes to his new home his "world" is now drastically changing so continued socialization is vital. We recommend enrolling your puppy in a puppy kindergarten class at around 12 to 16 weeks of age. This will give your puppy the opportunity to meet lots of new people and also give him the chance to meet and play with other puppies in a monitored, safe, controlled environment. We also highly recommend continuing with professional/formal training classes to the next level at 6-9 months of age. Puppies can go through a "fear imprint period" between 6-14 months of age, so continued socialization will help ensure your puppy gets through that.

As we mentioned, attending training classes will give your puppy an opportunity to be around other dogs in a monitored, safe, controlled environment; teach your puppy good puppy manners; and offers the important benefit of having professionally trained people to help you and your puppy get off to a great start. The time you invest in your puppy now will pay off when he/she becomes an adult dog. Preventing an unwanted behavior is far easier than having to correct an unwanted behavior. Remember in all your training

the key to having a great dog is plenty of daily exercise and mental stimulation. Always try to set yourself and your pup up for success!! To quote a reputable training center "A TIRED dog is a good dog, an EXHAUSTED dog is a GREAT dog!!!!"

It is imperative that you understand and advise your Veterinarians that Irish Water Spaniels may have a FATAL REACTION to SULPHA DRUGS and should not be treated with such unless the benefits clearly outweigh the risk of death. A warning sheet with a list of common sulfa drugs is attached and should be given to your veterinarian to be posted in the permanent file of your puppy.

Irish Water Spaniels are a heavily coated breed and as such require regular grooming. They should be thoroughly brushed with a pin brush at least once a week, bathed every 6-8 weeks (more often if necessary) and regularly trimmed with scissors (for a show coat), or clipped (if keeping a shorter pet coat) in order to keep the coat in good condition.

You may like to join the IWS yahoo groups list. It is an invaluable information resource. You will find tons of information on the breed and can post any questions you may have. You will have the benefit of talking to and getting answers from people who have owned/bred IWS for many, many years. Here is the link where you can join this list and receive daily emails, or the less frequent digest version:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IWS/>

We also recommend that you join the Irish Water Spaniel Club of America (IWSCA). You'll meet lots of other IWS owners and make many new friends. You will receive a regular newsletter, membership list, and breeder's directory. The IWSCA also has a website full of information on the IWS. You'll be notified of upcoming IWS events and gatherings, show and performance activities and results, health issues and warnings, litter announcements, and training tips.

Most of the items you will need for your IWS puppy are available at any of the larger pet stores, i.e. Pet Co, Pet Smart. There are also several catalogs and websites that usually are less expensive and should carry the products you will need i.e. Pet Edge (www.PetEdge.com) tel: 1-800-738-3343; KV Vet (<http://www.kvsupply.com>) tel: 1-800-423-8211; Drs. Foster and Smith (www.drsfostersmith.com) tel: 1-800-381-7179.