

rewards are the love and companionship they receive from their dogs, the satisfaction of creating a new life and improving the quality of their dogs, and the pleasure derived from watching their pups grow and prosper.

A bitch will be more “complete” if she has at least one litter: This is utter nonsense. Intact bitches are often at the mercy of their hormones and can experience temporary personality changes (when they're in season, pregnant or caring for young pups) which can be pretty difficult to live with. They are at fairly high risk for potentially fatal illness (e.g. pyometra, mammary tumors, uterine disease), in addition to all of the risks associated with pregnancy and whelping. On the other hand, spayed bitches are able to devote all their energy and attention to their human families.

I want my children to see the miracle of birth: When your bitch is whelping, she'll need your undivided attention. She'll also be happiest in a quiet room with just one or two trusted people present — most bitches do not like an audience. There won't be time to educate your children and care for your bitch, especially if the pups are being born quickly, or she runs into problems. And remember, whelping can be a pretty messy business, with lots of blood and gore. The possibility also exists that there may be deaths to witness along with the births. It makes much more sense to take advantage of the many excellent educational materials available to teach your children about birth.

Aren't all spayed or neutered dogs fat? No, no, no!! Although animals who have been spayed or neutered may need less food than their intact friends, dogs (with the exception of a small number whose weight problem may be related to a medical disorder) get fat for exactly the same reasons that people do — overeating and lack of exercise. That's it, that's all!

Won't they be missing something if they're spayed or neutered? Again.... no, no, no!! Dogs' urge to procreate is purely physical — it's all determined by hormones. It's the humans in their lives who want so badly to have a young version of their beloved Fido. Fido couldn't care less! And since there is no emotional or intellectual component to our canine pals' drive to procreate, removing the source of the hormones removes the drive. Which in turn leaves our pets free to concentrate all of their energies and time on being happy pets.

“Everyone” wants a dog just like mine. All your friends and family love your dog, and have said that they'd like to have one just like her. And you'd give anything to have a little clone of your beloved pet, too. Well, just like people, every dog is an individual. Even identical twins develop individual personalities as they mature. So, as hard as you try, you're never going to get another one quite the same as the one you have now. If you research your pedigrees very carefully, are able to determine where your dog's good characteristics come from and can find a mate whose pedigree complements your dog's then, if luck is on your side, you might end up with one pup out of the litter who's pretty close. And, if you have a really good eye for evaluating pups, you'll even be able to identify him. Of course, breeding is not an exact science, and you could just as easily end up with a bunch of pups with Ugly Aunt Edna's looks and Grouchy Uncle Killer's personality. And believe me, everyone has an Aunt Edna and Uncle Killer!

And finally, after the pups arrive, you'll learn the hard lesson that none of your friends or family members are named “everyone”. Suddenly, “everyone” will realize that they can't afford a dog, don't



have time for a dog, don't want a dog who sheds, don't have space for a dog..... The excuses are endless. In any case, the end result is always the same: you, stuck with a litter of puppies who aren't quite what you expected and who nobody seems to want.

So, love your Mals, and cherish their unique characteristics. And when you add new dogs to your family, be prepared to love and enjoy each as a special individual. Just don't expect them to be little clones of each other — that's simply too much to expect of anyone! (Of course, if you decide you are seriously interested in breeding, one of your goals will be to reproduce the things you like about your dogs. It just won't be your only goal!)

We hope these ideas will help you a bit as you consider whether or not you want to try your hand at breeding Malamutes. If you do, remember to strive for excellence and balance in all areas: health, temperament, conformation and breed type. We hope that

Other HELP League Publications:

*Because Dogs Are For A Lifetime...
Choosing The Right Breeder
So - You Think You Want A Malamute...
You Wanted To Know...*

About Malamute Rescue...

The Alaskan Malamute HELP League came into being when responsible Malamute breeders and concerned owners got involved in finding homes for pets when owners were no longer able to care for their dogs. In addition to rescue, assessment and placement of adoptable dogs, the HELP League also provides education and information for Malamute owners and runs a foster-dog program for dogs which cannot be placed. For more information about Malamute rescue, contact:

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To Breed— Or Not To Breed...

.....that's the million dollar question! There are many factors to consider before you decide to breed your Malamute(s). Which are the most important is the subject of never-ending debate. We believe that the differences are so slight as to be inconsequential. Small compromises will always be necessary, but breeders must strive for excellence in all aspects of dog breeding. We hope to be able to help you take an objective look at your situation before you make a decision.

DO THEY HAVE TO BE PUREBRED?

Before we go any further, we'd like to make it clear that we value all dogs, purebred or not! Having said that, we also believe that if you are going to breed Alaskan Malamutes, they should be purebred. In Canada, that means that they must be registered (or eligible for registration) with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC). Further, prospective moms and dads must not be registered under non-breeding agreements.

There are some real advantages to breeding purebreds. Through careful study of each dog's pedigree you can learn about their family and the traits, both good and bad, which are common to them. You will usually have the opportunity to meet many of your Mal's close relatives, so that you can evaluate their temperament, health and breed type (more about that later). You will be able to choose a mate for your dog who complements them; ideally one who shares most of their positive attributes and is strong in those areas where your dog is a bit weak. This careful planning will allow you to have a good idea of how your pups will turn out.

A major disadvantage to breeding purebred dogs is the growing number of health and temperament problems. However, these proliferate in large part due to careless breeding undertaken by individuals who are uninformed and who have not made a commitment to producing healthy, mentally sound dogs. No line is completely free of problems, but by taking the time to research your pedigrees and setting high standards for health and temperament in your breeding stock you will be able to work towards improving your stock and reducing the incidence of health problems.

HOW BIG A COMMITMENT IS IT REALLY?

Breeding dogs demands an enormous commitment. It takes time, money, dedication and patience. The tasks which must be completed seem to stretch on forever. First, research your breed carefully and select a breeder whose dogs are closest to the ideal you wish to strive for. Then, try to convince that breeder to trust you with a young bitch (and be prepared to wait a while for the right one). After she arrives home, spend two to three years raising her — nurturing, training, grooming, showing and loving her. Ensure that she enjoys impeccable good health by providing top-notch food, exercise and veterinary care. Obtain all necessary health clearances. Build a good relationship with her breeder, and enlist their aid in planning your first litter. Select a suitable stud dog, whose owners share your high standards.



When it is finally time to breed your girl, you will need to transport her to the stud dog. He may live nearby, or he may live across the continent. After she has been bred, you will spend nine weeks caring for your bitch and hoping that the breeding was successful. (If, as often happens, your bitch fails to conceive, you'll spend the next few months figuring out what went wrong and waiting to try again.) As your girl's due date nears, you will prepare a nursery: whelping box, heat lamp, blankets, towels, lots of newspapers, and a phone to provide quick access to your vet and an experienced canine midwife in case you run into problems.

Once she goes into labour, you must stay with her — to reassure her and to provide whatever help she needs. First time mothers can need plenty! Be prepared to sever umbilical cords, get puppies breathing and convince a very nervous mom that these are indeed her babies and she has to look after them. Learn the warning signs of impending trouble and be prepared to rush your bitch to the vet if need be. Most bitches do just fine, but there are a few who refuse to care for their pups. If this happens, you must be prepared to step in, providing round-the-clock feeding, cleaning, warmth and care.

If all goes well, mom will look after all of the pups' needs for the first three weeks, and your duties will consist of caring for mom, providing a warm, clean, dry environment and weighing, observing and handling the pups daily. From birth, mom will teach her pups how to be dogs; your job, also from day one, is to teach them how to live with people. As the pups grow, so do your responsibilities: feeding, cleanup, socialization, cleanup, playing, cleanup, grooming, cleanup..... You'll soon wish there were about fifty hours in a day!

Finding good homes for your pups is one of the most difficult tasks you will face. Malamutes are not for everyone and you will spend considerable time carefully screening prospective homes. Then, you will want to provide lots of information and support to help ensure that your pups receive the training and care they need..... and deserve!

Your pups will be sold with a written sales agreement and, ideally, a CKC Non-Breeding Agreement. The agreement will outline your responsibilities, as well as the buyers', and will detail guarantees regarding the pups' health. It will also spell out your lifetime commitment to your pups: if, for any reason, one of your puppy buyers is unable to keep their pet at any time during the dog's life, you will welcome that dog back with open arms.

As you can see, breeding dogs is an expensive undertaking:

purchase and care of breeding stock, stud services, health clearances, showing, advertising, veterinary costs, feeding, etc., etc. Most breeders are dedicated hobbyists, who are thrilled if they manage to break even. Profits from the breeding and sale of dogs are generally the realm of puppy mills and backyard breeders — those who provide minimal care for their dogs, who produce numerous litters without due consideration given to the health, temperament and conformation of the parents and who will sell their puppies to anyone with ready cash.

CAN YOU COPE WITH LOSSES?

It's a sad fact, but losses do occur in dog breeding. Puppies may be stillborn; some succumb to congenital defects during the first weeks of their lives; whole litters can be wiped out by infectious diseases. And, as sad as those losses are, the most devastating one occurs if your bitch dies due to complications arising during or after whelping.

IS SHE MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE?

Well, if you've decided that you are prepared to make the commitment to breeding better Malamutes, the next step is to determine whether or not your dogs are suitable breeding stock. This is a difficult task. It involves disregarding your love and affection for your pets, standing back and evaluating them with an honest, objective, critical eye.

As we've already mentioned, your breeding stock should all be CKC registered. They should also possess clearances for major health problems which are prevalent in the breed: these include hip dysplasia, chondrodysplasia, hereditary eye disease and, increasingly, hypothyroidism. And, just as important, all breeding stock should enjoy robust good general health.

Your dog's temperament should also be impeccable. A Malamute with correct breed temperament is friendly, playful, energetic, stubborn, independent and intelligent. They possess a strong working attitude, an essential quality in a sled dog.

Physically, your Malamute should conform as closely as possible to the breed standard (as established by the breed's national club and the CKC). Even though your Mals may not be expected to work as hard as their ancestors did, it is still important that they possess the physical and mental qualities necessary to perform the work for which they were originally bred. Because, if they can no longer fulfill their original role, they just wear the name "Alaskan Malamute" without really being true Mals.

Finally, your dog should have correct breed type. "Breed type" refers to all aspects of a breed's outward appearance and incorporates traits ranging from head shape, eye color, ear size, coat type, markings, and tail set to body build and structure, and movement. Type is what defines a Malamute uniquely as a Malamute and sets it apart from a Siberian Husky or a Canadian Eskimo Dog. Each breed should be easily recognizable; Mals with serious faults in breed type will not be recognizable as Malamutes.

WHY SHOULDN'T YOU BREED YOUR MAL?

To Make Money: It is very difficult to make a profit breeding dogs. The costs can become astronomical — anything which eats and requires veterinary care can be a very poor investment. Most breeders are satisfied if they break even once in awhile. Their true