

# Congratulations on Your New Tibetan Mastiff



## Introduction and Welcome

The American Tibetan Mastiff Association would like to congratulate you on the new addition to your family. The TM is a wonderful dog but it is not the easiest and your puppy will need help to turn into the wonderful dog that it can be.

ATMA is a national organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of the Tibetan Mastiff, and would like to share the following information with you.

## Brief History

Tibetan Mastiffs come from Tibet, in the high Himalayas. In Tibet, TMs are traditionally kept tied to the gates of the house or monastery, or tied to stakes in the nomad camps, and let loose at night. The Tibetan Mastiff was used to guard the nomad tents and the women and children. The dogs are expected to defend the flocks of goats, sheep and yak, the women and the children and the tents of their masters against predators such as wolves and snow leopards, as well as human intruders.

## Characteristics of the Breed

The Tibetan Mastiff is a large but not giant dog, measuring from 26-30 inches for males (90-150 pounds) and 24-28 inches for bitches (70-120 pounds). The TM is a powerful but surprisingly agile dog of great intelligence.

The TM has a beautiful, shining, all-weather, double-coat, perfectly suited to extremely harsh weather conditions. TMs generally only shed once a year, when they “blow” their coat—be prepared to groom and vacuum a great deal when your TM is blowing its coat. TMs should have impressive heads, heavy bone, and a beautiful plumed tail that is carried over the back. Allowed colors are black, blue gray and brown, all with or



without tan markings, and shades of gold, with or without sabbling.

## Temperament

This is a highly intelligent breed which has the ability to adapt to a variety of functions, but it is a breed that has been making its own decisions for thousands of years. The Tibetan Mastiff by nature is a guardian dog.

One should never compare them to the more easily trainable breeds, because they are intelligent and independent. They are aloof and capable of making good judgments, and definitely believe that they know better than their owner.

## Training

Because TMs are a large and very strong breed, basic obedience training should be a part of every TMs upbringing. Extensive socialization is essential for each puppy. To find obedience and socialization classes, contact your local kennel clubs.

Always take your puppy out as much as possible to as many new situations as possible. Positive reinforcement training works best for most TMs. Tibetan Mastiffs do not need protection training under any circumstance, and should not be used for schutzhund or similar work.

## With Children and Others

Most Tibetan Mastiffs are excellent with their own children and other people that they know or with new people to whom they are properly introduced. They are a guardian breed, however, and can be very protective of “their” children and their home. Most TMs do very well with small dogs and cats. In Tibet, TMs traditionally live with Lhasa Apsos, Tibetan Spaniels and Tibetan Terriers.



## Health

The Tibetan Mastiff is generally a hardy breed, with many living to 12 and beyond. There are some health issues found in the general canine population that are found in TMs as well.

Responsible breeders will have screened their dogs and can explain these problems and their incidence in their lines. These problems include hip and elbow dysplasia, low thyroid and seizure disorder. Please be sure to discuss these issues with your breeder and your veterinarian.

## Temperature Tolerance

TMs come from a very high altitude (16,000' and more) and love cold, dry weather. Heat and most especially humidity, can be very difficult for them. If you live in the south, your TM will need to be in air-conditioning most of the year.

## Identification

TMs are escape artists and love to wander. Please identify your TM with a collar and tags as well as with a microchip. A permanent identification (microchip or tattoo) can be registered with AKC Companion Animal Recovery. A 24-hour toll-free hotline helps locate the owners: there is a 100% re-homing rate with enrolled animals! Call 800-252-7894 or see [www.akccar.org](http://www.akccar.org) for information.

## Before You Consider Breeding Your TM

Breeding any dog is a serious responsibility and not an easy way to make money. No female needs to have a litter and no male needs to have sired a litter in order to have a full life. Nature is not always kind and bad things can happen to the mother and the puppies. Even though Tibetan Mastiffs are a “rare” breed, Tibetan Mastiff Rescue is always full. We strongly encourage you not to breed your dog casually: attend dog shows and specialties for evaluations of your dog; have all health checks performed; have reservations for

numerous homes; and be sure you can take unwanted puppies back for the next 10 or 12 years. And then, think about it again.

## Spaying and Neutering

The American Tibetan Mastiff Association recommends spaying or neutering all dogs not intended for the breed ring.

Spaying or neutering your TM has positive benefits for your pet and you. Spayed females often live longer and have fewer health problems. Spaying eliminates uterine and ovarian cancer and, if done before the age of 1, greatly reduces the risk of mammary cancer. Neutered males are generally less inclined to wander and are generally less inclined to be dog aggressive.

Remember—the American Kennel Club welcomes spayed and neutered TMs in obedience, tracking, agility and junior showmanship.

## American Tibetan Mastiff Association

ATMA is dedicated to the well-being of this breed. Please visit our web site at [www.tibetanmastiff.org](http://www.tibetanmastiff.org) for more information on the club and the breed. Please consider subscribing to the ATMA Gazette, published quarterly, for up-to-date information on this wonderful breed. Information on joining ATMA can also be found on the site or please contact us at [info@tibetanmastiff.org](mailto:info@tibetanmastiff.org).

## Tibetan Mastiff Rescue, Inc.

Tibetan Mastiff Rescue, Inc. is a national, charitable rescue organization. Unfortunately, there are always more rescue TMs than there are good homes. ATMA urges you to suggest adoption of a rescue to your friends who love your TM. For more information on TM rescue, or if you know of a TM in need of a new home or in a shelter, please e-mail [tmrescue@tibetanmastiff.org](mailto:tmrescue@tibetanmastiff.org).

