

Giving An Adoptable Dog A Home

(NAPSA)—If you are thinking of adding a pet to your family, adopting a dog from an animal shelter or rescue organization may offer a number of benefits.

For instance, these dogs often bond quickly with new owners and can have fewer needs than a young puppy. Plus, you can often find perfectly good adult pets that have matured to the point where they aren't rambunctious or demanding for activity.

Many shelter and rescue dogs are already house-trained and may only need some reminders and a few days to adjust to a new routine.

Very often, these dogs already know some basic commands taught in their first home or by shelter volunteers.

When you adopt an older dog from a shelter, the dog should be current with all shots, already "fixed" and heartworm negative at the very least. Some shelters include microchip identification with every animal.

Shelters do extensive evaluating of both their dogs and their applicants to be sure that both dog and family will be happy with each other.

If you are thinking of adopting a shelter dog, here are some tips:

- You might want to plan on making at least a couple trips to the shelter so you can observe the pets before picking one to take home.
- Look for a dog with a good temperament who is friendly and gentle around children. Watch the dog's response to signal words, such as "Easy" or "Gentle," or commands that force him to calm down, such as "Sit."
- Get a good collar and leash with identification tags and get him involved with friends' or neighbors' dogs. Socialize him



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with different types of people and make sure he will accept being around children.

Once you have decided on a particular dog and tested how he reacts to your family, find out why the dog is up for adoption. Ask the shelter specific questions, such as:

- Is the dog healthy now?
- Any known or suspected health problems?
- Has he been checked for worms?
- What parasite treatment/ prevention program is the dog on?
- Has he been exposed to any diseases?
- Any limping or other indications of bone or joint problems?

Although shelter dogs have been under the care of a veterinarian, you'll want to make an appointment with your regular veterinarian as soon as possible after bringing your new pet home. Your veterinarian can thoroughly examine your dog for any underlying medical conditions and prescribe a parasite prevention product to keep him healthy.

To learn more, visit www.growingupwithpets.com.