



Dr. Mulder is the owner and medical director of the Pet Hospital, located at 403 Fairview Drive in Brantford. While treating the 'whole' patient, his experience in emergency medicine, nutrition and 13 years as a general practitioner, allows him to lead the team as they serve the client, helping to meet all their pets' needs. This advice column is provided to help loving pet owners to make decisions in the care of their pet. If you have a question for Dr. Mulder, please send an email to [drmulder@fairviewpet.ca](mailto:drmulder@fairviewpet.ca) or call the Pet Hospital at 519-753-7257.

*Health Care  
Isn't Just For Humans!*

## DR. MULDER TALKS PET CARE GETTING A NEW PUPPY

**Q**: Dear Dr. Mulder: My family's cute puppy just died from parvovirus. Thankfully, the pet store offered a warranty that covered the treatment costs. We could not have afforded to treat him otherwise. How can we get a new puppy and be sure that it will not happen again?

**Dr. Mulder:** I wish this story was not so familiar. When most of us see a puppy, we cannot resist the urge to cuddle and coo in baby talk. Often a new puppy comes home after an innocent trip to a mall! No guessing can predict the future for these puppies. Hidden health problems and unpredictable behaviour concerns often lead to sad stories like yours. Many problems can be prevented by getting the right kind of dog for your family. Temperament selection is an important part of your decision to get a puppy. Breed encyclopedias can give an idea of size and temperament but it's a good idea to meet the parents if possible.

For purebreds, the best place is a breeder. A good breeder will screen their breeding dogs for genetic problems. They will also make sure the puppies get regular parasite treatments, as well as early vaccinations to protect against diseases (eg parvovirus.) Most good breeders will also allow you to have your potential puppy "vetted" - that is, to have it checked over by your veterinarian who can detect any early warnings. In order to find a breeder, a solid recommendation of a satisfied owner is invaluable. You can also look in directories such as Dogs in Canada.

If you are not picky on the breed, you have a lot of options: from "puppies for sale" signs on country roads to classified ads for "Puppies - Free to a Good Home". Although these puppies may appear perfectly healthy, many have no protection from the nasty diseases that can strike your puppy. Beware of the hidden costs of a free puppy. The pets from the SPCA already have had vaccines as well as the spay or neuter surgery making them an excellent choice for your family.

Your question also mentions your cost concerns. As you have seen, health care costs can be significant. In the next installment, I will discuss some options to reduce the financial impact of owning a pet.

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