



March 3, 2018

You may be desperately in the grip of Wolfhound Fever. You've wanted one for years and you feel sure you're ready to make the jump. I completely understand. I've been there. So has every other Irish Wolfhound companion today. But...are you sure you know what sort of dog it is you're aching to bring home?

You've done your research, I'm sure. You may have talked to several other wolfhound owners. You know Irish Wolfhounds are *big*. There are special steps to take when

they're young to protect their fragile joints. They need big, fenced in backyards to run. All this is heavily covered by several other sites on the internet.

You were probably aware that wolfhounds are more prone to osteosarcoma, heart problems and bloat. But did you know that wolfhounds, like several other pureblooded breeds today, are entering a genetic bottleneck? The Wild Stare did an [extended series](#) on it earlier this year. The upshot is that due to too heavy use of a few popular sires, the wolfhound gene pool has become disturbingly shallow, and the trend is worsening. This means that more genetic disorders are cropping up.

No, most wolfhounds are not staggering from sickness. They're brimming with energy and vigor. But if you follow Irish Wolfhounds on Facebook, you'll regularly see someone's beloved hound has suddenly come down with a serious and possibly life-threatening condition. You'll see outpourings of sympathy for hounds that crossed the Rainbow Bridge far too young. And if you know wolfhounds, you know the loss of one is a devastating experience.

Fear of infirmities is not a hard-and-fast reason to avoid bringing home an Irish Wolfhound. It *is* great motivation for having solid insurance for your hound. Because should they become ill or injured, you'll have lived with them long enough to know there's no question whatsoever that you'll do anything it takes to see them well again. And your vet bills can quickly climb into the thousands of dollars.

Health concerns are also one of the *best* reasons for going to [a reputable breeder](#) to get your hound. Sure, you can find a breeder on the internet and maybe in a couple of weeks, drive one county over and claim your puppy. The price is about the same, but it's sure a lot more convenient than waiting for breeders who may have one litter a year, who will interview you so closely that you'll think you're marrying their daughter, not buying a puppy, and who may send someone to your home to verify that conditions there are right for you to have one of their puppies. Then, should you pass the gauntlet and sign the contract (yep, contract), you may have to travel hundreds of miles for your wolfhound puppy. Is it really worth it?

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

A reputable breed does expensive health screening of the mother, the father and the puppies, too, once they're born. They make knowledgeable decisions picking breeding partners to continue enhancing their line. Because the odds are that one of the puppies in the litter will be staying with them and joining their pack.

Health testing, while expensive for the breeder, is your best line of defense against future health problems. It's no guarantee. But too many people skip the process and go to backyard or for-profit breeders, and when their hound

suddenly developers problems, the breeder is disinterested and harder and harder to reach. The best breeders are certainly not in it for profit and often barely break even with a litter. They love the breed, they're committed to it and their puppies are very much like their children. There are plenty of articles on the topic at The Wild Stare.

What you also may not realize is that you're not just getting a dog when you bring home an Irish Wolfhound, you're committing to a new lifestyle. A wolfhound will insist on engaging you. A wolfhound will get under your skin as no dog ever has. They're quirky, funny, maddening...and you'll soon wonder how you ever lived without one before.

A wolfhound will challenge you to learn much more about the breed. They'll inspire you with their intelligence and giant spirits, they'll fall in love with you and you with them. Despite the challenge of their size, you'll want to take yours with you whenever you can. Through their bond with you, your view of all dogs will change. They not only become an integral part of the family, they'll take over your life.

If you're still enthusiastic about getting an Irish Wolfhound, you'll find plenty more on this site about the Wolfhound Life. You might start [here](#), and [here](#)...and maybe [here](#).