

With appreciation and thanks
to the
Great Dane Club of New England, Inc.

ORIGIN OF THE GREAT DANE

A dog of Dane-like proportions has been in existence since the earliest period of recorded history. A Dane-like dog may well have been the companion of prehistoric man.

Drawings of Dane-type dogs appear on Egyptian monuments, supposedly dating from 3000 B.C. A Grecian coin from the 5th century BC shows a dog closely resembling the Great Dane. There is ample evidence of the early existence of a dog similar to the Great Dane in Egypt, Greece, Denmark, Italy, France and Germany. While one can trace a dog resembling the Great Dane back for thousands of years, there is no positive proof as to its direct descent because of the many different names by which the Dane was known.

The Great Dane bred in Germany and the Great Dane bred in England were evidently developed for a long time with little or no interbreeding, but most authorities agree that the ancestors of the German-bred and the English-bred Danes are the same.

Cropped ears on Great Danes are evident on tapestries depicting hunting scenes. Cropping was probably done to protect the ears from catching on forest undergrowth or to help make them less vulnerable to damage from the sharp fangs of the boar.

The most active period of importing German-bred Danes to the United States occurred before World War II. The first we hear of Great Danes in the United States was in 1857. In 1877, the records show there was an entry of eleven Danes in the Philadelphia National Show. In the 1886 Westminster Kennel Club show, for the first time, they were called Great Danes.

In 1887, the first Great Dane champion was recorded, a brindle, born in 1885, bred in Germany and owned by Osceola Kennels in Wisconsin. In 1889, an American Specialty Club for Great Danes was formed in Chicago. It was the 4th breed club to become a member of the AKC. Later the original club was succeeded by The Great Dane Club of America and was organized in New York in 1891.

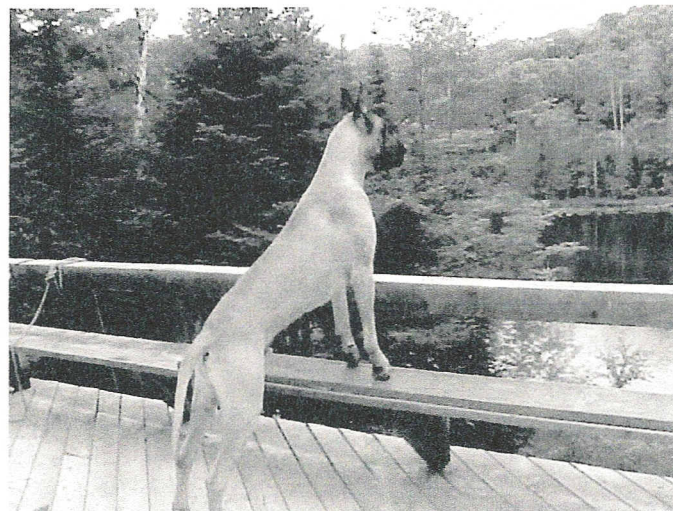
UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT DANE

The Great Dane Personality

It is as impossible to generalize about all Great Danes as it is to generalize about all people, but the breed shares some general characteristics. The extremes of temperament that befitted the early, fierce boar hunter have been modified as appropriate for a dog that is now primarily a companion. The Standard calls for a dog who is "spirited, courageous, always friendly and dependable, and never timid or aggressive". Modern Great Dane temperament ranges from a quiet, contemplative dog, to an outright extrovert. The Great Dane is a giant breed. Small aberrations in temperament might be tolerated in a smaller breed, but are magnified in a dog of this size. A Great Dane should always be stable, tractable and trainable.

What does a Great Dane look like?

The most obvious thing about Great Danes is that they are big. The American Kennel Club (AKC) breed standard, written by the Great Dane Club of America, requires females to be at least 28 inches tall at the shoulder and males to be at least 30 inches, but most Great Danes will be significantly taller and may weigh 120 to 170 pounds or more. Ears may be cropped so that they stand erect or be left natural so that they drop.



The breed standard recognizes six colors:

- *Fawn* - yellow gold with a black mask. Black should appear on the eye rims and eyebrows, and may appear on the ears and tail tip. The deep yellow gold must always be given the preference. White markings at the chest and toes, black-fronted dirty colored fawns are not desirable.
- *Brindle* - yellow gold base and always brindled with strong black cross stripes in a chevron pattern. A black mask is preferred. Black should appear on the eye rims and eyebrows, and may appear on the ears and tail tip. The more intensive the base color and the more distinct and even the brindling, the more preferred will be the color. Too much or too little brindling are equally undesirable. White markings at the chest and toes, black-fronted, dirty colored brindles are not desirable.
- *Blue* - pure steel blue. White markings at the chest and toes are not desirable.
- *Black* - glossy black. White markings at the chest and toes are not desirable.
- *Harlequin* - pure white base color with black torn patches irregularly and well distributed over the entire body. A pure white neck is preferred. The black patches should never be large enough to give the appearance of a blanket, nor so small as to give a stippled or dappled effect. Eligible, but less desirable,

are a few small gray patches, or a white base with single black hairs showing through, which tend to give a salt and pepper or dirty effect.

- *Mantle* - black and white with a solid black blanket extending over the body; black skull with white muzzle; white blaze is optional; whole white collar preferred; a white chest, white on part or whole of forelegs and hind legs; white tipped black tail. A small white marking in the blanket is acceptable, as is a break in the white color.

Any Great Dane that does not fall within the above color classifications must be disqualified from the conformation show ring. Although these dogs fall outside the colors recognized by the Great Dane standard, they may be shown in companion events and make wonderful companions and pets.



Physical & Personality Traits

- Calm, good natured, lovable disposition. *Gets along well with people and other dogs and pets. Generally good with children, but can be too big for toddlers. Loves to be a lap dog! Should never be "trained" as a guard dog, but naturally protects his family.*

- Sensitive but sometimes stubborn. *A Great Dane takes punishment or reprimand to heart. Can be stubborn and conveniently "hard of hearing." Requires training.*
- Loyal but adaptable. *Great Danes are faithful to their families, but adapt well to new homes and situations, even as adults.*
- Sociable. *Great Danes do not do well outside alone. They love to be with their people. Many do not "self-exercise" and can be destructive if left alone with nothing to do.*
- Low indoor activity level can lead to obesity. *Healthy, trim Danes have good energy levels. They are also content to snooze away the afternoon in a patch of warm sun. This laid back nature makes them desirable house pets, but their weight must be kept in check. A Dane needs exercise several times a day.*
- A giant, active dog. *Some adult Great Danes are well aware of their size and are gentle and cautious around toddlers, the ill and the elderly, but many are not. You must be ready to train and watch a dog that is too friendly and exuberant.*
- A smooth coated, short-haired dog. *Great Danes need very little grooming compared to coated breeds, but to maintain health, ears, teeth and nails should be checked weekly. Regular brushing with a soft brush is necessary, as well as an occasional bath.*
- Growing puppies have special needs. *Until they are two years old, Great Danes should not have forced exercise such as jogging beside a person or bicycle. The joints of this heavy-boned breed are still forming and excessive stress or strain may cause permanent injury. Small children should never pick up Dane puppies, and adults should do*

this by supporting both the front and rear of the dog.

- Some Great Danes drool. *And that drool can fly to amazing distances when they shake their heads.*
- If cropped, ears need taping. *Cropped ears may need several months of diligent taping to stand erect.*

IS THE GREAT DANE THE RIGHT DOG FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?

Before making the decision to purchase a Great Dane, ask yourself the following questions:

- The Great Dane is a giant breed that takes up more room in the house, needs an appropriate sized car to ride in safely and will cost more to maintain than a small breed. In addition, a Dane, especially a rambunctious puppy, can knock down a small child in play or wreak havoc on your garden or home. *Have you taken all this into consideration?*
- The Great Dane is a sociable, friendly breed. Great Danes need to have human contact, affection, regular socialization with other people and animals, and firm, consistent training. *Are you ready to provide this?*
- Although Great Danes may be content to be couch potatoes, they still require exercise appropriate to their age. Many do not "self-exercise." *Are you committed to providing proper exercise in all types of weather?*
- Great Danes have good noses and many have a "stubborn streak." When not on a leash, they need a fenced yard or they may "follow their noses." *Can you commit to putting up a sturdy, appropriate fence?*

- Great Danes can be excellent companions for almost any activity you wish to pursue including jogging, but you **must** wait until after your pup is two years old to avoid damage to growing joints. *If you are looking for a puppy, are you willing to wait for it to grow up?*

If you have answered yes to the above questions, then a Great Dane may be the right dog for you.

HOW TO FIND A "GREAT" GREAT DANE

The best place to obtain a well-bred Great Dane is from a reputable breeder. The key here is "reputable". At all costs, avoid backyard breeders, on-line brokers and puppy mills, who work with poor quality bloodlines which may be genetically prone to a host of health problems.

Backyard breeders and puppy mills are only interested in making a profit, frequently advertising in local newspapers or selling entire litters to pet stores for resale.



Young fawn pups. Ears may be left natural or cropped.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A REPUTABLE BREEDER

Reputable Breeders

- Are usually members of The Great Dane Club of America or one of its affiliate clubs and believe in working towards improving the conformation and performance of the Great Dane. These members are guided by a Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Ask many questions of prospective owners in order to insure that their puppy is going to a good home.
- Unless other arrangements are made, almost always require a spay/neuter agreement and/or limited AKC registration for pets.
- Are usually involved in showing their dogs in conformation competition, obedience, agility, rally, tracking or other companion events.
- Wish to be contacted if for any reason a puppy they bred must be placed in a new home.

Finding a Reputable Breeder

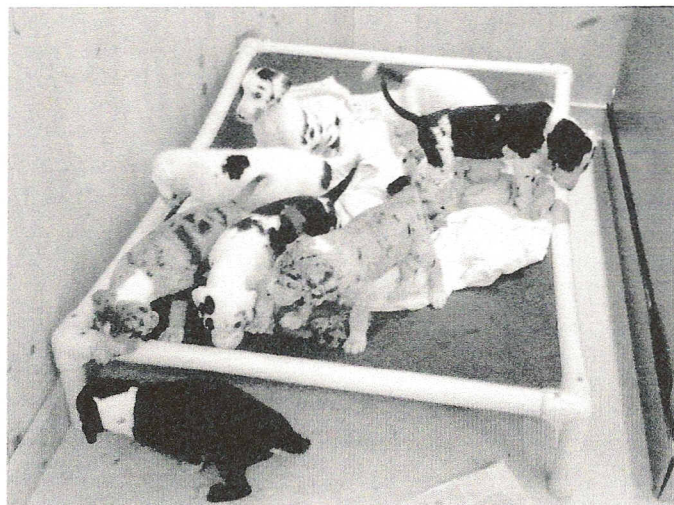
- Contact the Great Dane Club of America, Inc., or local Great Dane affiliate club and request names of breeders. You may not always find someone in your local area.
- Attend dog shows and talk to breeders, handlers and other owners who may be able to give you referrals on obtaining a puppy.
- Ask your local dog-training center if they can recommend a local breeder.

Useful Contacts

The American Kennel Club (AKC)
5580 Centerview Drive Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27605-3390
919-233-9767 or 800-252-5545

The Great Dane Club of America <http://gdca.org>, click on "Organization", then either "Officers" or "Chairpersons" for contacts. For Breeders click on "Great Dane", "Breeding", then "Breeders List".

Once you have decided that the Great Dane is the right breed for you and you have located a reputable breeder who has puppies available, the next step may be receiving a set of photos in the mail or by email or an invitation to visit the puppies. Although some breeders let buyers choose a puppy, many breeders match the personalities of the puppies with the personalities and lifestyles of the buyers. It is not unusual for the breeder to select the puppy for you.



A litter of harlequins, mantles and merles (merles are not eligible for conformation showing but make good companions)

Questions a Breeder May Ask

1. Have you ever owned dogs before and specifically a Great Dane?

Familiarity with dogs insures a higher success rate in placing a puppy in a new home. It is a particular "plus" if a prospective buyer has had the experience of owning a unique breed like the Great Dane.

2. Why do you want a Great Dane?

It is important to determine if a giant dog like the Great Dane will be the right choice for a new buyer. This is a breed which matures slowly, but will be very large at maturity. It's important for the buyer to be fully aware of this, since "he got too big" is one of the reasons Great Danes end up in rescue.

3. Do you have an enclosed or fenced in backyard?

The dominant sense of all dogs is the nose, which gives them the tendency to roam. They may become injured or lost. The large size of the breed makes some people over-react to a dog this size. Chaining a Dane (or any breed) to an outdoor doghouse or tree is inhumane and can result in serious injury or death.

4. Where will your new puppy live?

The friendly, affectionate nature of the Dane and the fact that this breed craves the companionship of other animals and people means that it will be happiest in the house where it can be cared for by a loving family.

5. How long will the puppy be alone?

Breeders are reluctant to place a Great Dane puppy in a home where it will be alone for excessively long periods. Even the companionship of another dog or cat will go a long way in providing companionship for a new dog. The affectionate Great Dane does not do well by itself for extended periods.

6. Are you willing to spay or neuter a pet Great Dane?

Spaying or neutering is usually required by responsible breeders who do not want their valuable bloodlines be used by novice and backyard breeders.

7. Can you afford not only the purchase price of this pet but also the maintenance? New owners need to be aware of how much it costs to keep their pet well cared for and healthy.

8. Is the decision to purchase a Great Dane a unanimous one in your family?

Danes who go into a family situation where not everyone wants this unique breed may start out with a couple of strikes against them.

9. May I visit your home or have a friend visit?

Breeders may want to come to your home to see for themselves where their puppy will live, or, if they live some distance from you, they may ask another breeder to do this for them.

10. Who is your vet?

The breeder will want to know that you have a reliable source of veterinary care for your Dane and may want to speak with him or her. You will

need to find a veterinarian who has experience with large breed dogs.

Questions to Ask a Breeder

1. How long have you been breeding AKC Great Danes?

Good breeders have usually been involved with Great Danes and showing their dogs for a minimum of 3 or 4 years.

2. Do you belong to the Great Dane Club of America or an Affiliate Great Dane Club?

Membership in these clubs involves working within a code of ethics that gives greater credibility to a breeder. Some unscrupulous people have been known to claim false membership in clubs so you want to verify such memberships.

3. What type of activities do your dogs participate in?

A majority of breeders are involved in conformation competition. This would indicate that their Danes are probably good physical representations of the breed. Other breeders may participate in obedience, tracking or other companion competitions.

4. What type of health problems do you see in your Great Danes?

Virtually every breeder who has been involved with any breed will encounter some health problems from time to time, so beware the breeder who says he/she has never seen any problems. Refer to the section on Health to familiarize yourself with some of the common health

problems in the Great Dane. Ask what types of health testing the sire and dam have had.

5. Do you have any puppies available, and if not, when do you plan another litter?

In some parts of the country, there is frequently a shortage of Great Dane puppies. Some breeders receive up to 8 or 9 calls a week for pet puppies with no litters being anticipated for perhaps another 6 months or longer. The majority of breeders will put your name on a waiting list. Other breeders whose lists are full are usually more than willing to refer you to other reputable breeders in the area.

6. What kind of warranty do you offer?

Guarantees vary among breeders and are sometimes connected to your agreement to raise your puppy according to the individual contract agreed upon.

7. What is the price of the dog?

Pet puppies might be less expensive than show prospects, but many breeders feel they have put equal love, effort, time and money into all puppies in a litter and have the same price for both pet and show puppies. What separates a show potential dog from a companion only may be trivial, therefore, don't expect to get a "cheap" puppy from a breeder and never request the one who has "something wrong" with it.

8. What type of paperwork will the breeder provide?

Reputable breeders will provide a bill of sale, a four generation AKC pedigree, and a contract detailing the conditions of the sale. AKC registration papers will be included unless they

simply have not yet arrived back from AKC in the mail. Most reputable breeders will also give you information in writing in the form of articles, pamphlets or even books to help you raise your puppy. All health and diet information will be spelled out in detail here and in conversations with your breeder.

NEVER BUY A GREAT DANE FROM A PET STORE OR AN ON-LINE BROKER

Pet store Great Danes and those from on-line brokers come from backyard breeders and puppy mills. Most likely, you will not know who bred your dog or have anyone to contact if you have questions or a problem. The health of these Danes is generally at risk because they were not bred by knowledgeable breeders devoted to improving the health and appearance of the Great Dane. Pet store puppies are separated from their mothers at too early an age and usually do not have the chance to develop healthy bodies and temperaments. In fact, pet store Danes often become seriously ill and end up costing their owners hundreds and even thousands of dollars in veterinary expenses. Pet stores, puppy mills and on-line brokers do not guarantee the long-term health of a puppy.

Most poorly bred Great Danes are smaller than those from reputable kennels and often lack the majestic head and expression that define the breed. They may, instead, look more like Greyhound or Labrador Retriever mixes. Despite the inferiority of the dogs they sell, pet stores usually charge as much, if not more, than reputable breeders of quality Great Danes do.

No matter how impatient you or your children are to get a Great Dane, it is always better to wait, even a few months or longer, and get one from a good breeder!

MALE OR FEMALE?

There is relatively little difference in temperament, activity or trainability between a male and female Great Dane. Both make excellent companion pets. Females (bitches) who are not spayed go into season (or heat) approximately every 6 months. In general, bitches are somewhat smaller than males, but remember that they are still both giant dogs over 120 pounds.

ADULT OR PUPPY?

For some prospective new owners the selection of an adult Dane may be an appropriate choice. Reputable breeders sometimes have adult Danes available who have been retired from the show ring or from the breeding program. Former brood bitches who are now spayed may also be placed permanently in pet homes. In both cases, this type of arrangement can work well for the person looking for a good pet Great Dane.

PET OR SHOW?

After you have decided that the Great Dane is the breed for you it will be necessary for you to decide if you want a pet or show quality Dane. The majority of prospective new owners want a pet quality Dane. Breeders usually sell as pets those Danes who do not come as close to the official breed standard as other puppies in the litter. A pet may have cosmetic flaws that are not desirable in the show ring. In the eyes of the pet owner these features are rarely seen as flaws. It is also important to understand that pet quality does not mean that a dog is in any way less healthy than a show prospect.

THE GREAT DANE AS A COMPANION DOG

There are many AKC “companion” venues open to Great Danes from Obedience offerings on six levels to tracking, agility and rally, as well as non AKC events including freestyle (dancing with dogs) and therapy work. Every Great Dane should have at least a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) title. After that, the sky is the limit! Since Great Danes have active minds, having a “job” to do can make for a happy relationship all around.

THE GREAT DANE IN CONFORMATION SHOWING

Conformation or “breed” showing was one of the first competition venues, as it was the way the early Dane breeders evaluated their breeding stock. Evaluation of breeding stock is still one of the main goals of this competition today, but people show their dogs for other reasons as well. These reasons may include “just for fun”, to earn a championship title, to participate in a family event and other reasons.

Dogs entered in conformation showing are evaluated by judges both standing still and at the trot. They are mentally compared to the ideal Great Dane as described in the official standard written by the Great Dane Club of America. A dog earns the right to carry the CH (Champion) designation before his name after acquiring 15 points under at least three different judges, including two three-point “major” wins. As with all sports, there are rules and prescribed methods of showing. Contact a local breed club or a training facility to see if they have “breed handling” classes to learn how to properly present your dog. Your breeder, or other Great Dane breeders in your area, should know how to direct you to good training classes.

ACQUIRING A RESCUE DOG

Dane rescue groups are devoted to finding homes for Great Danes who have been abandoned or given up by their owners. Many of these Danes end up in local humane shelters and, unless suitable homes are found for these animals, they are destroyed. For this reason, Dane rescue groups have been formed in many parts of the country and local Dane breed clubs may support a rescue group that tries to find new families for these abandoned dogs.

These rescue groups are to be commended and supported as they do a great service for the Great Dane breed. Many of these groups can find a wonderful pet for you, accomplishing two things, a great home for a Dane who really needs one, and a soon to be cherished member of your family.

For additional information check the rescue link for the Great Dane Club of America www.gdca.org, click on “Great Dane”, Health and Welfare”, then “Great Dane Rescue”).

Advantages of Adopting a Rescue Dog

Rescue dogs are often an alternative for a loving family who truly wants a Great Dane but may not want a new puppy. Many people find joy and pleasure in giving a “new home” to a dog deserted by its former owners. Most Great Dane rescue dogs are adults and many are already housebroken as well as spayed and neutered. In addition, they may be over the destructive puppy chewing stage.

Disadvantages of Adopting a Rescue Dog

In some cases, rescue Great Danes have been abused and severely mistreated by their former owners or

need medical care. The adoptive family may therefore need to be especially understanding and spend more time helping their new friend fit into their home. Many rescue Great Danes may be timid or shy until they have had a chance to adapt to their new surroundings. Rescue dogs may also have behavioral problems, health problems, or other issues that require extra resources, training or other care. Many of these dogs with special needs blossom into endearing pets with training, love and patience.



DON'T GET A DOG FOR CHRISTMAS!

Most good breeders do not sell puppies during or even around the Christmas holidays. Many puppies purchased at this time end up being returned, resold or abandoned in shelters. Because holidays tend to be busy with people coming and going, this is not a good time to bring a new puppy into your home.

A new puppy (or older adopted dog) needs time to rest as well as a consistent, uninterrupted training schedule to be properly housebroken and acclimated to his new home and environment. Additional holiday hazards include the possibility of puppies ingesting fragile glass ornaments, tinsel, wrap, ribbon, poisonous

holiday plants or chewing on electric light cords. Any of these situations can lead to serious injury (including thousands of dollars in veterinary bills) and even the death of your new puppy. Reputable breeders are usually more than willing to hold your Great Dane puppy until after the Christmas holidays.

Remember that getting a new puppy should be a unanimous decision for the entire family. Therefore, don't give a puppy as a "surprise" gift for any occasion.

MAKING YOUR HOME SAFE FOR YOUR DOG OR PUPPY

Puppies are curious and will get into anything and everything! Safeguard your new puppy as you would a toddler. If you are bringing home an adult dog, it is also a good idea to dog proof your house and yard until your dog is "at home" and you have a good idea of his behavior.

- Block off access to all stairs, balconies and decks from which a puppy could fall. Swimming pools should be secured with a tall, secure fence.
- Keep anything toxic such as household cleaners, detergents, etc. away from your puppy or adult dog. In a garage area, clean up any gasoline spills and be especially careful of spilled antifreeze, which can kill. Dogs seem to love its smell and taste. Don't allow access to poisonous plants such as azaleas, poison ivy, mistletoe, holly and philodendron, among others.
- Keep phone cords, electrical cords and outlets away from your puppy and block access to spaces behind TVs, refrigerators, etc. Remove sharp objects and things that could fall on your puppy. Fireplaces can be hazardous.

- Never leave small objects or children's toys, which a puppy could swallow, lying on the floor. A puppy will pick up almost anything in its mouth. Even a coin which falls to the floor can be potentially harmful if your puppy swallows it.
- Eliminate the possibility of your puppy getting its head caught in any type of tight spot, which could lead to strangulation. These could be things like railings, trellises or fences. Be especially careful of cropped ear wraps catching on something.
- Be sure all doors in your house close securely and that visitors are aware of the importance of closing doors. Many a dog has been killed by a car when someone forgot to close a door securely. Teach your dog not to go through an open front or back door without a command to do so. Padlock fence gates that lead to a road so mistakes cannot happen. Before letting your puppy into a fenced yard, always check to be sure that gates are securely closed.



THE GREAT DANE SHOPPING LIST: THINGS TO BUY FOR YOUR PUPPY

- One crate to fit an adult Great Dane. Most Dane crates are 48"Lx28"Wx36"H.
- Washable bedding for the crate. It should be something very soft. In the event that the puppy chews it, it should also be something not too expensive to replace and something that is not hazardous.
- A 4-quart stainless steel bowl for food and a stainless steel bucket for water. A 5-6 quart size is sufficient.
- A 6-foot long web or leather leash. A nylon adjustable buckle collar. Don't use a choke collar on a young puppy. Great Dane puppies grow so quickly you will need several sizes.
- Nail clippers or nail grinder. Kwik-Stop or similar product (to stop the bleeding if you cut your puppy's nails too short).
- An ear cleaner & cotton balls. A solution of white vinegar and rubbing alcohol is a good homemade cleaner.
- A hound glove or other soft bristle or rubber brush for brushing your puppy.
- Nutritious treats for training.
- Toys which are safe for puppies

THINGS TO TAKE WITH YOU WHEN YOU PICK UP YOUR PUPPY OR DOG

When the big day arrives for you to pick up your Great Dane you will need to take the following items with you in the car: a collar and lead, a crate with a

Until your puppy is housebroken, confine him to a crate at night. Do not give in to crying and whining! He will soon learn to accept being crated. At night, take him out one last time as late as you can and wake up as early as possible to let him out in the morning. Until he is housetrained, be sure his crate is not too big or he may be tempted to eliminate in a corner of the crate.



Some owners prefer to leave their puppy's ears natural

- Take a 2 or 3-month-old puppy outside to eliminate at least every 3 or 4 hours. The more consistently you follow a schedule the better.
- Key times to take him out are first thing in the morning, after waking up from a nap, 15 to 20 minutes after eating and after playtime. Do not play with your puppy before he has eliminated.
- Watch for your puppy's signals that he needs to eliminate; the most common are sniffing, circling or going to the door. Take him out the same door each time and to the same elimination space outdoors.
- Allow plenty of time for elimination. Use a key phrase to signal elimination such as "Do your

business!" Some puppies need 20 minutes or more. Walking your puppy on a lead can help stimulate a bowel movement.

- When your puppy eliminates, reward him immediately with a treat, affection or playtime.
- Maintain a regular feeding schedule and do not leave food down for more than 20 minutes.
- Only reprimand your puppy if you catch him in the act of soiling in the house. A reprimand is a verbal screech only, nothing physical. Immediately take the puppy out – even if he's in the middle of going—and praise the puppy if he eliminates outside. Thoroughly clean and disinfect the soiled area to remove any odor.

SOME FEEDING TIPS

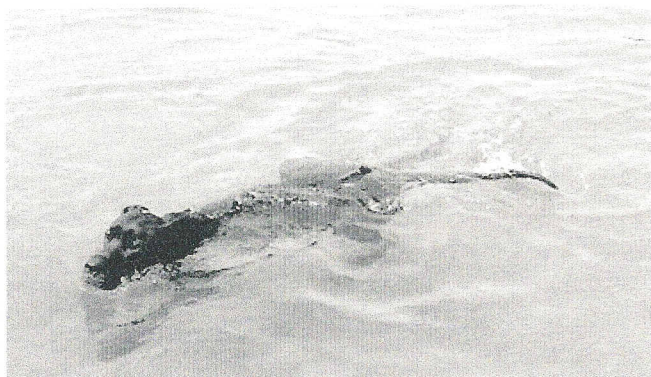
- A properly balanced diet can make a big difference in your Dane's well being. Part of your family budget should include the cost of feeding a good quality diet. You need to speak to breeders about what they feed their Great Danes. Stick to a feeding schedule and feed in the same place. Consistency can help with housetraining. Teaching your dog to eat in his crate can be very helpful especially when traveling.
- When traveling, take water from home. Changes in water can cause diarrhea on the trip.
- Great Danes should not look "roly-poly" and should not have stomachs that hang down. Excess weight is very hard on growing joints and bones.
- Don't be concerned if your puppy doesn't eat the first night in a new home. Settling into a new environment and separation from littermates may be stressful.

VACCINATION PROTOCOL

Professional institutions, as well as the leading experts in veterinary medicine, agree that vaccination programs need to be individualized for a dog's age, health status and even geographical location, and should be constructed with the owner in consultation with their own personal veterinarian.

Finding a regular attending veterinarian and doing preventative medicine, including at least annual "wellness" checks on your Dane, is strongly urged.

You may refer to the Great Dane Club of America website for the most current general recommendations for vaccinations.



EXERCISING YOUR GREAT DANE

Young Great Danes need only moderate amounts of exercise. Puppies who have daily access to a fenced yard will usually get enough physical activity. Care must be taken not to over-exercise a puppy while their muscles and bones are still forming. Until the age of 4 to 6 months, it is important that puppies be allowed to sleep after their play period or exercise and that children understand the need for their puppy to rest. Great Dane puppies can go on walks with humans, but

only at the puppy's pace and they should never go jogging with a human before two years of age. Taking your walks near a busy spot will allow your Dane to meet strange people and hear strange noises. This allows him to be used to the bustle of life, and will make for a well socialized animal.

GROOMING THE GREAT DANE

Even though the Great Dane is a giant breed, the grooming requirements are very few. Weekly brushing is necessary for the good health of your dog, with extra brushing during the shedding seasons.

Cleaning Ears

When ears get dirty, use cotton balls dampened with a "swimmer's ear" solution (50/50 rubbing alcohol and white vinegar) to swab them out. Uncropped ears may require a little more attention as the flap restricts air circulation to some degree. Weekly cleaning should be more than sufficient.

Cleaning Teeth

A Dane's teeth and gums should be kept clean and healthy. Teeth should be checked for tartar as a part of the weekly grooming and may actually be brushed. There are many teeth-cleaning products available that are made especially for dogs. For those knowledgeable with the use of a scaler, small tartar deposits can be carefully removed at home. Heavy tartar build-up should be removed by a veterinarian.

Trimming your Great Dane's Toenails

A Great Dane's nails need to be kept short to prevent soreness and stress on the feet. Nails should be trimmed at least every week. Various types of nail trimmers and grinders are available for this purpose. Your breeder or veterinarian will be happy to teach you how to trim your Dane's nails. Some puppies may resist nail trimming but with patience and a

gentle approach by their owners they soon learn not to resist this important part of grooming.

Grooming the Great Dane Coat

Brush the Great Dane coat weekly with a hound glove, grooming mitt or brush. Shedding coats are best handled with a shedding rake, rubber curry, or your hands.

Bathing the Great Dane

Danes can be bathed as often as necessary with a dog shampoo. Human shampoos have the wrong pH and can damage the coat, skin and interfere with the elimination role the skin plays in immunity.

SPAYING AND NEUTERING

If you purchase a pet puppy from a reputable breeder it is usually with the requirement that females will be spayed and males neutered. This prevents adding to the over-population of unwanted dogs in today's society. Spaying and neutering is a win/win situation for both you and your Dane. You will eliminate the mess of twice-yearly seasons in your bitch as well as helping prevent unwanted pregnancies, tumors and other female disorders. Neutered males also become more settled and are not tempted by bitches in season. In addition, neutering plays an important role in prostate health.

HEALTH CONCERNS FOR GREAT DANES

Having a good relationship with your veterinarian is vital to the health of your dog. In addition to regular, preventive veterinary care, a proper balanced diet in the correct amount for your dog's size and age; clean

dry bedding in a draft free roomy area, daily exercise, and love and companionship will go a long way in keeping your pet healthy. The following are some of the health issues that have been reported in Great Danes, and you should be aware of them.

Bloat (gastric torsion)

The stomach traps gas inside, swells and then may actually twist, cutting off the blood supply and causing extreme pain. Unless treated quickly, death may result. Avoid strenuous exercise before or after eating or feeding extremely large meals. Most adult Danes do better on two meals a day rather than one very large meal. Educate yourself on the symptoms of bloat and seek veterinary attention *immediately* if you suspect bloat. You may want to talk to your breeder and veterinarian about an elective gastropexy.

Cancer

Cancer is a leading cause of death in dogs, with bone cancer (osteosarcoma) the most common cancer among Danes.

Eyelid and Eyelash Problems

Great Danes may suffer from ectropion (a turning out of the eyelids), resulting in a dry cornea, and entropion (a turning in of the eyelids), causing lashes to dig into the surface of the eye. Both conditions can be surgically corrected, but a dog may not be shown after surgical correction. Make sure to get evaluation by an experienced breeder and veterinarian before going the surgical route.

Heart Problems

The most common heart problem in Danes is cardiomyopathy, which impairs the heart's ability to pump efficiently. Symptoms include lack of energy and coughing after exercise.

HOD (hypertrophic osteodystrophy)

This bone disease typically affects puppies in the rapid growth phase between four and eight months of age. Symptoms include fever and painful joints and limbs. HOD seems to be associated with “over nutrition,” so it is a good idea to keep a Dane puppy on the lean side and learn about proper nutrition for a growing giant-breed puppy.

Panosteitis

An inflammation of the long bones often seen in Great Danes from 5 months of age to two years. Lameness caused by pano may move from one leg to another and can last from a week to 6 months or more. Danes with pano should not be exercised until symptoms disappear.

Obesity

Obesity is harmful to a Great Dane’s health. Organs and joints cannot handle the stress of excess weight.

Von Willebrand’s Disease (VWD)

A disorder of the blood which may cause moderate to severe bleeding, similar in some ways to hemophilia.

Wobblers

A disease of the vertebrae in the neck, Wobblers may occur in young and old Danes. It causes lack of coordination in the legs, and the symptoms may be mild or severe.



SHOULD I BREED MY GREAT DANE?

Unless you have purchased a “show quality” Dane and have a pre-arranged future breeding agreement with a reputable breeder at the time of purchase, it is not advisable to breed your pet Dane.

Great Danes who are purchased from pet stores, on-line brokers or back yard breeders should not be bred because their puppies will not improve the breed as a whole, which is the goal of a responsible breeder.

Do not breed your Dane because:

- You love your pet’s personality and want to have puppies like him or her.
- You think it would be a good experience for your children to see the “miracle of birth”.
- You plan to make money on the litter.
- It will provide a nurturing or sexual experience for your pet.

A litter should be bred only after much thought, study and research has been done by the prospective breeder and with the help of an experienced breeder who is a

mentor. If you do decide to breed your Great Dane be prepared to make the following commitments:

- Have flexible working hours.
- Be able to function on little or almost no sleep
- Have a least one person to stay with the puppies at all times
- Be prepared to keep puppies you can't place and the possibility of getting puppies back at an older age.
- Be prepared to deal with illness or death of any puppies or even the dam.
- Be aware that puppies are extremely noisy and messy and require hours of cleaning up after and socializing.
- Be prepared to pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars in vet bills if something "goes wrong" with the litter.

USEFUL BOOKS

The Basic Guide to the Great Dane by Breeders Who Know the Breed

The Great Dane: Dogdom's Apollo by Nancy-Carroll. Draper

New Owner's Guide to Great Danes by Jill Swedlow
Your Great Dane by Lina Basquette

The Great Dane Club of America Charitable Trust supports Great Dane welfare and rescue efforts, educational programs, Scholarship Programs for junior handlers, initiatives to create great awareness of breed-specific health problems and medical research efforts to improve the quality of life of the Great Dane.

Through your support, the GDCA Trust will have the necessary resources to respond to calls for help in the most critical areas of concern...the health and welfare of the breed.

For additional information go to
<http://www.gdca.org/charitable.htm>

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If you need additional copies of this publication please contact the Great Dane Club of America Corresponding Secretary at

<http://www.gdca.org/officers.htm>