

Do your homework before welcoming home your new dog

Welcoming a new pet into your family requires simple steps like being able to provide them with adequate care, shelter and food. Those are the basics. Responsible pet ownership should start with even more research into what the best fit is in your household and where you can find that animal. Should you start with a family friend's dog that just had a litter, find a breeder, or visit your local rescue or shelter? While we can welcome dogs into our lives from many backgrounds, knowing that background is an important first step in understanding their health and the potential health risks they may harbor.

Best practices before picking a dog:

- Make sure you can provide adequate care and companionship for the dog.
- Research breeders, shelters or rescues.
- Once you find a dog, ask questions:
 - Where was the dog bred, raised or rescued?
 - Did it receive any medical treatment in the past?
 - Does it have any known medical conditions?
 - What is its vaccination history?
 - Did its mother or littermates have any health issues?
 - Talk to your current or prospective veterinarian and ask if they have any recommendations or concerns.

Best practices once you welcome the dog home:

Schedule an initial appointment with your veterinarian.

- Ask about recommended and required vaccines.
- Ask about routine medications like flea/tick and heartworm preventatives.
- Learn about specific health issues to the breed/type of dog.
- Report any concerns about the dog's health to your veterinarian.
- Get to know your dog's routines and be alert if anything changes dramatically.

Pet owners who are curious about canine brucellosis can review the

[Board's Frequently Asked Questions flyer](#)

(https://www.bah.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/documents/Canine_Brucellosis_FAQs.pdf).