

Akita Myths

All too often people fall in love with an Akita they see in a book or a movie, walking down the street or even perhaps that cute little puppy they have seen only to find out this might not be the right breed for them after acquiring one.

Our goal at Akita Rescue Society of Florida is to explain "total" Akita ownership to anyone who may be considering this breed.

As a prospective new owner, you should be fully aware of the "special conditions" that may arise when adding your new Akita as a family member.

Far too many Akitas find themselves homeless (in shelters and rescues, strays, even as dumped dogs) or just as "new home needed" ads in newspapers.

Some of the most common and totally unacceptable reasons for owner give ups are:

We didn't know he was going to get this big.

Akitas can grow to 100 lbs.

He/She doesn't like other dogs.

Dog Aggression can be inherent in this breed and usually can not be predicted by the breeder. Your Akita can NOT be "expected" to accept other animals or dogs; this is a characteristic of this breed.

He/She doesn't like when company comes to visit.

Many Akitas simply do not take well to strangers in your home-some welcome them but this is not a rule.

He/She doesn't like other peoples' children.

Your Akita may tolerate and love your children-but not accept your children's friends-this is reality and can again be very characteristic of this breed.

We don't have enough time for him/her anymore.

Akitas live for 9 to 15 years you should be prepared for this before deciding on this breed.

My homeowner's insurance won't issue a policy.

This is something you NEED to investigate before deciding on this breed.

He/She sheds too much.

ALL Akita owners live in fur lined houses-this is reality.

We are moving.

Would you give up your children when you move?

We are getting a divorce.

ONE person in the household MUST be the responsible party for the dog-again children are parts of divorces every day yet they don't end up in orphanages.

We just can't control him/her anymore.

Then it is time to go back to obedience school and begin working through these issues

With a dog - this IS part of dog ownership of any breed.

He/She is fighting with the neighbor's dog.

If an Akita is allowed access to others dogs it will probably fight with them-it is YOUR job as a responsible owner to make sure this is not an issue.

He/She is food aggressive.

Akitas are and can be food aggressive-it is part of the nature of the breed.

He/She needs more room to run.

NO Akita requires more space then another and many do very well in small backyards. They are not an overly active breed-running in large areas can encourage dogs to be uncontrollable.

He/She keeps breaking out of our yard.

It is YOUR job as a responsible owner to make sure your dog is protected from compromising situations - you must make sure your yard is secure enough to keep your Akita in and to keep others out of the Akitas area.

He/She bit someone.

Any bite by an Akita against a human is a serious offense - it is YOUR job as a responsible owner to deal with aggression in an appropriate manner - a dog that bites or has been known to bite humans is a dog that has been created by you and perhaps failed by you.

Being responsible (unfortunately) sometimes means ending your dog's life through euthanasia - NO Akita should be re-homed because it bit a human - admit that you failed and deal with the problem in an appropriate manner. To re-home an Akita with a bite history is passing

off your problems to someone else and is totally unacceptable ownership.

None of these are "good" reasons to give up and re-home a "family member". Many of them are the fault of the owner not training and properly socializing the dog, especially at an early age.

If you are considering adding an Akita to your household, you should consider each item on this list and decide in advance how you would deal with any of these problems. If your answer to any of these problems would be "re-homing" your dog, then this is probably not going to be the right breed for you.

If you saw an Akita that you really liked, or maybe met someone who owned an Akita that really tickled your fancy, then maybe you need to look a little closer at what it takes to own this breed.

First and foremost, you **MUST** realize that each and every Akita is an individual, just because your friend has one who is really sweet, nice and obedient does not mean that **YOUR** new Akita will be the same way. Obedient dogs are not born that way; they are molded into good family members through intelligent ownership. While serious breeders usually do breed with the best temperaments in mind, it still takes quite a bit of work on the owner's part to achieve that final goal of a good family dog.

There are several aspects of responsible Akita ownership that cannot be ignored and **MUST** be addressed before adding an Akita to your family.

1. Akitas can NEVER be off lead.....EVER!

They have a very high prey drive and will give chase to anything that moves. Sometimes this can be a leaf blowing in the wind; it can be another dog, a rabbit, a squirrel, or even a child! When a lucky Akita catches their prey-they usually do so by pouncing with the front (or all four) feet. This action can easily harm a child.

2. Akitas "can" be very good escape artists, it is imperative that your yard be secure enough for an Akita - a minimum of a four foot fence is a must (many Akita owners have found that four foot is not high enough and have to increase that height to six feet) Akitas can dig and they can dig quickly - it doesn't take long for an Akita to dig under a fence.

3. Your yard (or the Akitas enclosure) must not only be secure enough to keep your dog in, but must also be secure enough to keep others OUT!. If a child's ball goes over your fence and the child enters your property-your Akita might not allow the intruder on his/her property-it is your job as a responsible owner to make your yard secure enough as to keep others out. We must strive very hard to keep our dogs out of compromising situations.

4. A child is simply not strong enough to walk an Akita on lead-so if you have any intention of allowing your children to walk your Akita, you should begin researching a smaller breed. It can be very difficult for 150 to 200 lb adult to control an Akita intent on going its' own way and an impossible task for a child.

5. No matter how well trained your Akita is-he/she will most likely not back down from, or walk away from a challenge. If you are on a walk with an Akita and another dog approaches you, you had better have a good plan of action in advance of this situation. No matter how responsible your actions are with your own dog, you will have no control over the actions of other irresponsible dog owners. This can pose a big problem for many Akita owners.

6. Each and every Akita is an individual-the Akita "can" be dog aggressive, there is and can be no guarantees that your dog (no matter how well bred, trained or socialized) will accept other dogs.

7. Many Akitas can be food aggressive-our experiences have been that even the most mild mannered Akita can and may protect his food or food bowl. We have found this to be especially true with other animals. The vast majority of Akitas can be trained to "not" be food aggressive with adults or humans, but few will tolerate other animals trying to eat from their food bowls. Most Akitas do not like to share their food.

This is really not the breed for everyone, however there is nothing like owning an Akita and most people who have owned this breed vow they will never own another breed. When the breed fits and fits well it can be a very rewarding experience. There are many wonderful qualities in owning an Akita. Our goal here at ARSF is to make each and every potential owner fully aware that they will be entering into a 10 to 16 year commitment with their new family member.

As a potential New Akita Owner I have read and seriously considered the above statements and still feel this is the right breed for me. It is my promise to Akita Rescue Society of Florida to devote as much time as needed to socialize, train and love my new Akita through any problems we may encounter.

Signature_____

Printed Name_____

Address_____

Date_____

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Written by Baycrest Akitas, MD, Ed and Kathy Coffman