GENERAL

bichon shih tzu puppies for sale in calgary

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Are you dreaming of a small, affectionate companion that brings sunshine into your home? If you're looking for a playful, low-maintenance dog that fits perfectly into a Calgary apartment or a family-friendly house, the Bichon Shih Tzu mix might just be the answer. This guide will walk you through everything you need to know about finding, buying, and caring for **bichon shih tzu puppies for sale in Calgary**. From understanding the breed's unique traits to choosing a reputable breeder, we've covered every step to help you make an informed decision and welcome a healthy, happy puppy into your life.

Why Choose a Bichon Shih Tzu Puppy?

The Bichon Shih Tzu mix combines the best qualities of two beloved breeds: the Bichon Frise's cheerful personality and the Shih Tzu's luxurious coat. This blend produces a small, sturdy dog that is gentle, intelligent, and affectionate. Here are a few reasons why this mix is a top choice for many Calgary residents:

- Temperament: Bichon Shih Tzus are known for their friendly nature. They thrive on human companionship and are excellent with children and other pets.
- Adaptability: Whether you live in a high-rise condo or a suburban home, this mix can comfortably adjust to various living situations.
- Low Shedding: With a coat that resembles a plush teddy bear, these puppies shed minimally, making them suitable for households with allergies.
- Longevity: With proper care, these dogs can live 12 to 15 years, giving you a long-term companion.
- Health: While all purebred dogs can have predispositions to certain conditions, responsible breeders ensure robust health, reducing the risk of major health issues.

Understanding the Bichon Shih Tzu Mix

Physical Characteristics

The Bichon Shih Tzu mix typically weighs between 12 and 18 pounds and stands about 10 to 13 inches tall at the shoulder. They often inherit the Bichon's round face and the Shih Tzu's expressive eyes. Their coat can vary from silky and wavy to a more curly, plush texture, and it comes in a range of colors such as white, black, brown, or a combination of these. Because of their mixed heritage, the size and coat type can differ slightly from one puppy to another.

Personality Traits

These puppies are social butterflies. They enjoy being part of the family and love interactive play. Their intelligence makes training relatively straightforward, but they can also display a stubborn streak reminiscent of the Shih Tzu's independence. With consistent positive reinforcement, they become well-behaved companions.

Exercise and Activity Needs

Although they are small, Bichon Shih Tzu puppies require regular exercise to maintain healthy weight and mental stimulation. Daily walks, short play sessions, and puzzle toys are excellent ways to keep them active. In Calgary's variable weather, indoor play is just as important as outdoor strolls.

Health & Care Essentials

Common Health Concerns

Responsible breeders screen for common issues such as:

- Eye problems (conjunctivitis, cataracts)
- Dental issues (crowding, periodontal disease)
- Hip dysplasia (rare but possible)
- Respiratory problems (especially in brachycephalic breeds)

Regular veterinary check-ups, preventive care, and a balanced diet can mitigate many of these concerns.

Vaccinations and Preventive Care

At 8-10 weeks, puppies should receive core vaccinations: distemper, parvovirus, adenovirus, and rabies. They also benefit from a booster at 12 weeks and a yearly health check. Parasite prevention (fleas, ticks, heartworm) is essential, especially during Calgary's summer months.

Spaying/Neutering

Spaying or neutering not only helps prevent unwanted litters but also reduces the risk of certain cancers and behavioral issues. Most reputable breeders will discuss these options with you before the sale.

Grooming Your Bichon Shih Tzu

Coat Maintenance

Despite the low shedding, regular grooming is crucial to keep the coat in top condition. A weekly brushing session removes loose hair and prevents matting. Depending on the coat type, you may need to trim the fur around the eyes, ears, and paws.

Bathing and Ear Care

Bathing every 4-6 weeks with a hypoallergenic dog shampoo helps keep the skin healthy. After each bath, thoroughly dry the ears to prevent moisture buildup, which can lead to infections.

Dental Hygiene

Dental health is often overlooked but vital. Brushing your puppy's teeth with a dog-friendly toothpaste twice a week reduces plaque buildup. Dental chews and toys also aid in maintaining oral hygiene.

Nutrition: Feeding Your New Puppy

Choosing the Right Food

Opt for a high-quality puppy food that lists real meat as the first ingredient and contains essential fatty acids for coat health. Look for products balanced for small breeds, as they have different caloric needs compared to larger dogs.

Feeding Schedule

At 8-12 weeks, feed your puppy three to four small meals per day. Gradually reduce to two meals a day by 6 months of age. Overfeeding can lead to obesity, which is common in small breeds.

Supplements and Treats

Ask your vet about supplements like omega-3 fatty acids for coat health and joint support. Treats should be given sparingly; choose low-calorie options and avoid those containing xylitol, which is toxic to dogs.

Training & Socialization

Basic Commands

Start with simple commands such as “sit,” “stay,” and “come.” Use positive reinforcement—treats, praise, and play—to reward desired behavior. Consistency and patience are key.

House Training

Use a crate or designated area for bathroom breaks. Take your puppy outside every 2-3 hours, especially after meals or naps. Reward them immediately after they eliminate outside.

Socialization

Expose your puppy to a variety of people, environments, and other animals. Calgary offers many dog-friendly parks and events where you can safely introduce your puppy to new stimuli.

Finding Reputable Breeders in Calgary

When searching for **bichon shih tzu puppies for sale in calgary**, it’s essential to choose a breeder who prioritizes health, temperament, and ethical practices. Here’s what to look for:

Certification and Accreditation

- Look for breeders affiliated with reputable organizations such as the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) or the Alberta Kennel Club.
- Check for certifications like the Canadian Small Dog Association or the American Kennel Club’s (AKC) “Certified Breeder” program.

Health Screening

Responsible breeders conduct health tests on both parents to screen for genetic conditions. These may include eye exams, hip and elbow scoring, and blood work.

Living Conditions

Visit the breeder’s facility to ensure the puppies are raised in a clean, safe environment. Puppies should have ample space, fresh water, and social interaction with their littermates.

Transparency and Communication

A reputable breeder will provide detailed information about the puppy’s lineage, health records, and vaccination history. They should also be open to answering your questions and providing ongoing support.

Questions to Ask Before Buying

1. What health tests were performed on the parents?
2. Can I see the vaccination records?
3. What is the puppy’s diet and feeding schedule?
4. Do you offer a health guarantee or warranty?
5. What training and socialization have the puppies received?
6. What is the return policy if I cannot keep the puppy?

Visiting the Breeder

When you visit a breeder, pay attention to the overall environment and the puppies’ behavior. A well-balanced puppy will be playful yet calm, not overly aggressive or fearful. Observe how the breeder interacts with the puppies—responsible breeders will treat them with kindness and respect.

The Adoption Process

Once you've chosen a breeder and puppy, the process typically involves:

- Completing a contract that outlines health guarantees, spay/neuter requirements, and return policies.
- Paying a deposit, usually 20-30% of the total cost.
- Receiving a health certificate and vaccination records.
- Setting a pick-up date and arranging transportation.

Many breeders will also provide a starter kit that includes a collar, leash, basic grooming tools, and a feeding schedule.

Preparing Your Home for a New Puppy

Safety First

Remove any hazardous items such as electrical cords, toxic plants, or small objects that could be swallowed. Secure trash cans and keep medications out of reach.

Essential Supplies

- Food and water bowls
- Crate or puppy playpen
- Comfortable bed
- Chew toys and interactive toys
- Grooming tools (brush, nail clippers)
- First-aid kit

Establishing Routines

Dogs thrive on routine. Set consistent times for meals, walks, and bedtime. This helps your puppy feel secure and reduces anxiety.

Long-Term Care and Lifestyle Integration

Regular Vet Visits

Schedule annual check-ups to monitor overall health and update vaccinations. Discuss preventive care, including dental cleaning and parasite control.

Exercise and Mental Stimulation

In addition to daily walks, provide puzzle toys, scent games, and training sessions to keep your puppy mentally engaged.

Social Activities in Calgary

Calgary offers numerous dog-friendly parks such as Nose Hill Park, Fish Creek Provincial Park, and the Calgary Zoo's pet-friendly events.

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