

## **Basenji Puppies**

### **Get to Know Me Better**

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about basenjies. We have included important information for your consideration of possibly adding a basenji to your family. The basenji breed is quite different than other dogs and we understand they are not for everyone. We hope you enjoy learning more in depth about their needs and if they can become part of your pack!

The basenji is a hunting sight and scent hound originating out of central Africa. Basenji's love to chase anything that runs including squirrel's and other dogs, etc. This hunting instinct is who they are and they should never be off a leash outside of a safely fenced or controlled area. Additionally, many basenji's have been known to dart out of the front door running away for hours and are sometimes hit by cars. If motivated enough, dogs can pop through a screen of an open window. Moreover, crates are highly suggested while traveling in the car for safety and to keep them from jumping out of the car. Basenji's love to run freely and need to several times a week in a basenji proof backyard or dog park. They are hilarious to watch playing and stay rather active up to their teen years. Once a basenji gets out to run, they are quite mellow, affectionate, and less likely to get into as much mischief at home.

The basenji breed is not free from all health concerns. Major health concerns include Fanconi Syndrome and Progressive Retinal Atrophy and have harmfully affected basenji's for years. Fortunately, our puppies' parents have been DNA tested not to produce these diseases. Additional tested diseases and the results of incident affected for the basenji breed are listed by Disease Statistics by Breed on the OFA.org website. Moreover, it is not uncommon for a basenji to have umbilical hernias. Most small hernias are harmless and do not affect them, but they should be examined by a vet if there is a concern. However, if the hernia is large it is sometimes advisable to have it repaired at the time of being neutered or spayed. Furthermore, it is illegal in many counties outside of the United States to remove dew claws. Fairly recently some basenji breeders in the United States have also started to leave dew claws on too. We suggest checking the dew claw nail once a month and trim nails as needed to prevent possible injury. Basenji's tend to become allergic to scented laundry detergent and perfumed soap. As a result, we use hypoallergenic laundry detergents and soap to avoid any allergic reactions. The life expectancy of a basenji usually falls in the range of 12- 15 years old.

Bringing a puppy into your home is much like bringing home a newborn infant from the hospital in the sense of that they are a lot of work that you may not have expected. A young puppy leaving their litter mates and mom, may whine for weeks as they adjust possibly giving you sleep deprivation and worry. What you do at home in the first month is a dynamic time affecting your dog's behavior the rest of their lives.

Basenji's are very intelligent and often train people. If you are inconsistent in your training and let puppies do whatever they want you will probably create a spoiled puppy. We strongly suggest that all puppies and new owners go through a puppy class. These classes are a fun

passage in helping to get your lifelong relationship off to a good start and are fantastic for socialization. Puppy classes are usually 4-8 weeks long, once a week, and for 45 minutes. Please only use trainers that use positive reinforcement and that checks that all dogs enrolled have vaccinations up to date. Petco and Pet Smart have excellent classes.

Our puppies will have their first shot at four weeks and a booster at eight weeks before they go to their new homes. The label from those shots will be included in your paperwork for your vet. Puppies will need to have additional adult shots at 12 weeks, a booster at 16 weeks, and another booster one year later, then annually. Legally, all dogs must have a rabies shot given by their vet at four months of age, a booster one year later, then rabies shots every three years. Please consult with your veterinarian what vaccinations are needed in your region and establish a schedule to protect your dogs. It is recommended to do a fecal test before worming your dog to avoid possibly giving medication unnecessarily.

It is strongly suggested that when you are not supervising your puppy that you have a “house” for them. That “house” can be a specific gated area or a large crate/pen. This is suggested for both the puppy’s safety and if you have any desire to keep your household belonging the way you left them. Basenji’s puppies, like most puppies, can be very mischievous and active chewers. Not only can this be very frustrating for the owner it can be harmful for the puppy’s health. Basenji puppies love to chew/eat remote controls, electrical cords, furniture, socks, underwear, buttons, batteries, trash contents, toilet paper, cardboard, etc. Sometimes pet sprays like Bitter Apple or a water squirt bottle help.

Once you have decided on a “house” for your basenji, make it fun and a safe retreat and not a punishment. Kind of like a “man cave” as dogs are natural den animals. They will most likely protest in the beginning as they are pack animals and will want to be by your side. However, most people have to leave the house sometime and may want a couch to come home too instead of a room full of stuffing.

Remember basenjis are extremely clever so be sure you are the leader in this pack or they will train you. If the “house” you chose is a crate and the puppy cries and you let it out, you have just taught the puppy that you let it out when it cries. The puppy will continually be reinforced in crying to get what it wants and you are now trained by the puppy. Rather, be clever with positive reinforcement acclimating the puppy with short times in the “house” at feeding and such and let it out only when it is not crying or has stopped crying. When you want the puppy to go into its “house” have code word like “treat” and they will run into the house for its treat in there. Never feed any dog treats from China. We suggest small pieces of chicken, cheese, hot dogs, or turkey sandwich meat. The dogs “house” should become its comfort place that it enjoys and feels safe. When you leave the house, we suggest a natural knuckle type chew bone made in the USA, letting them have a view of the outside for stimulation, and leaving a **talk radio** on to keep them company.

Potty training a basenji is very easy as they are naturally clean dogs and do not want to potty in their house. Helping the puppy understand where it needs to go and praising them is a great

way to start your potty training. If they make a mistake pick them up and put them where you want them to go. Put a couple of poops in the spot in the yard if you want them to poop there, leaving a scent for them.

Some general guide lines may help in understanding their needs and routines. For example, once your puppy eats it will most likely potty within 15 minutes. Take it to wherever you want it to potty immediately after every meal and first thing in the morning, and let them do their business. A nice rule of thumb with timing a young dogs potty routine, is that it needs to potty every "X" hour it is old by months up to about eight months old. For example, if a puppy is two months old, it probably has to pee every two hours. Three months old, three hours, etc. At six months old a puppy should hold its potty six hours. This guideline and understanding can help you prepare and hopefully alleviate any frustration for both of you. Unless of course it is raining. Most basenjis are not fond of rain and can be resistant to go outside when it is wet. If you cannot let your very young puppy out that many times a day due to your schedule consider litter box training them in the crate with non-toxic litter.

Puppy teeth, ouch! A nippy puppy can take the fun right out of any adorable puppy play time and can become a danger as they get older. Puppies chewing and nipping are a normal way for them so explore their world, relieve anxiety or boredom, and to help relieve pain from incoming teeth. However, it is an unacceptable behavior towards humans and needs to be addressed immediately and daily in puppies. There are many things that can be done to curb this negative behavior while still respecting their natural needs to chew and explore. What happens when puppies or dogs bite each other too hard? They yell ouch! If a puppy nips yell ouch loudly. Substitute a toy for your arm to chew on in their mouth. Lift their lips as if you are inspecting their teeth every time they nip. The worst thing you can do to a basenji is ignore them and walk away. A good time out may be needed if they are obstinate from all of the above mentioned due to immaturity and being too wound up. NEVER hit a basenji. Basenjis do not respond well to punishment. If you hit a basenji for nipping, they will think it is part of a game and try to nip harder and faster and therefore become dangerous. It only takes a few consistent times to help a nippy puppy stop if handled properly. Basenjis are very intelligent.

When choosing basenji chew toys, it can be a tricky choice as they get older and more destructive in their chewing. Anything with strings, buttons, squeakers, or plastic that can be bit off, etc. can be deadly. Our basenjis like the round knuckle type bone that is made in the USA.

New basenji owners can be in for a shock when discussing basenji proof yards. Do not let the size of these little dogs surprise you as they can be mighty climbers and diggers. Some basenjis can climb a chain link fence like a ladder or jump a four-foot fence like a kangaroo. Possible digging solutions can include burying chain link under the fence, or placing blocks or railroad ties at the fence line. A tall solid fence or a very small patterned fence that cannot be climbed by little feet are very effective too. In our yards we use kennels from the online "K9kennelStore" with the no climb "Expanded Metal" fencing and no dig bars at the base. These are fantastic pens allowing your dogs to stay outside on beautiful days.

Dog parks can be a tricky and dangerous place. Many vets claim that dog parks are their best business due to injuries, so go at your own risk. Additionally, there have been dogs known to be killed at dog parks or due to their injuries. If going to a dog park our experience is to first, make sure your dog is protected with their vaccinations, etc. due to dirty puddles, contaminated drinking water, and possible worms in poop there. Second, if there is an option for a separate large and small side of the dog park, take yours to the small dog side. Third, keep your dog on a leash and try to introduce them to other dogs through a fence. Ask the other owner if their dog is nippy or reacts badly to dogs chasing them or jumping on them. Forth, enter the dog park keeping your excited basenji on a leash to help ensure there will be less problems. I also put my basenji back on a leash when a new dog enters for introduction or when a dog is leaving to avoid mine escaping out an open gate. After everything feels fine, let your dog off the leash and keep an eye on them and others as things can change in a moments time. If other dogs start fighting, try to leash your dog immediately keeping it from joining the pack in fighting. Never get between fighting dogs as many owners have been seriously injured this way. There are several sprays and noise makers that may help to break up a fight, but if the fight is bad this will not likely work effectively.

So, with all of this information why do basenji's steal people's hearts? These amazing little creatures are full of affection, comedy, and are truly unique. Additionally, many people love how clean basenjjs are as they clean themselves like a cat and have an extremely low grooming regimen. They do not have that stinky "dog" smell and their short coat helps keep things clean around the house in comparison to other longer haired breeds. They are much quieter than other breeds and when they are vocal it is often a welcome behavior of amusement. They have ridiculous sleeping positions at times that can be irresistible in wanting to snap a picture of and share in disbelief. Basenji's use their paws in a very tactile way much like a cat and playfully crouch down on their front end while playing. Many basenji owners say that "they would never own any other breed" due to their positive and entertaining characteristics.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this information to learn more about basenjjs.

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