

## **Your lifestyle and a Coton de Tulear**

This guidance will provide you with information to assist when deciding if the Coton de Tulear is the perfect breed to suit your lifestyle. Their big personality, affectionate nature and loyalty make them the perfect addition to a growing family, or a faithful companion to a single person looking to share their home with a new pet.

While the Coton de Tulear Club of the United Kingdom champions the breed, we offer a balanced view of the many questions you should consider before committing to buy a Coton de Tulear. We consider:

1. The Coton's lifespan;
2. Considerations regarding your lifestyle;
3. Longer term considerations; and
4. Being a responsible Coton owner.

### **The Coton's lifespan**

A Coton de Tulear can live up to 20 years, although 14 to 18 years is more common. A Coton needs attention and care throughout its life; this takes a lot of time and money. Owning a Coton is a long-term commitment.

### **Considerations regarding your lifestyle**

Why are you getting a Coton?

Are you getting a Coton for yourself or for your children?

Is the potential owner responsible enough to own a Coton?

Are dogs allowed where you live (rental properties may have restrictions)?

Is the home able to comfortably accommodate a Coton?

Is there a garden or nearby outdoor space to exercise the Coton?

If getting a puppy, can you devote enough time to a Coton in the first few months when he needs toilet training, socialisation and obedience training?

Can you devote enough time to him throughout his life?

Who will look after the Coton while the owner is at work?

Can you afford day to day expenses of feeding and caring for a Coton?

Can you afford pet insurance and / or the veterinary fees when the Coton needs treatment?

Are all family members in agreement with the decision to get a Coton?

What will happen to the Coton if you are ill and need to go into hospital or can't walk the dog?

Who will look after the Coton when you go on holiday; can you afford dog boarding, and will the boarder sufficiently care for the Coton's unique coat?



## Longer term considerations

The maturing dog – will I be able to cope?

- Following the puppy stage, you will need to prepare for adolescence. It's a time when dogs will try to dominate you if left to their own devices, which could lead to aggressive behaviour if not nipped in the bud sooner.
- This is where training is essential to ensure your dog listens to you. It is also a time when females will come into in season (usually lasting around 3 to 5 weeks) and during this period you will need to keep her away from male dogs to avoid accidental pregnancy. She may also go through a false pregnancy which can be quite distressing both for the bitch and yourself, but again this will pass in time.
- Male 'teenage' dogs could hump everything in sight (which can seem funny to us, but could end up being a nuisance to others), scent marking their territory inside the house and if not properly supervised, mate with every female they come into contact with.
- Therefore, if you are not looking to breed from your dog you might want to consider having your dog neutered, but this could cause other health problems if done too early. It is recommended not to neuter your dog until fully mature normally by 12 months for a male and 18 months for a female to ensure your dog's bones have completely fused, and hormones have kicked in.
- Your Coton puppy will also start to go through a coat change usually around 10 months of age and could last anywhere between 8 and 12 months. You will need to be prepared to groom your dog once or even twice a day during this period to prevent the build-up of mats. Don't despair, this period will pass in time. See our separate guide to grooming your Coton de Tulear.

Adulthood – is my lifestyle appropriate?

- The Coton is a sociable breed that enjoys human company and really does not like to be left for long periods of time. Your dog may show separation anxiety if the breeder and you have not dedicated sufficient time to effective training. They may howl or pee and poo in the house when you leave. If you can't provide companionship yourself, or make provision for someone else to, then you will not be meeting that dog's welfare needs. This could put you in danger of breaching the Animal Welfare Act and you could be depriving the dog of a home that can provide companionship.
- If your lifestyle means there will be times when you need to leave your puppy at home alone, you should gradually get him accustomed to being left by leaving him for short periods of time.
- You should never leave a Coton for any longer than 4 hours if you can help it. **If you work full time and cannot make arrangements for your dog to be looked after while you are out, you should consider not having a Coton at this current time.**
- Leaving the television or radio on for company when you go out can help.
- Also ensure that your puppy has plenty of toys as a distraction and is in an area where he cannot get into mischief or harm himself.



## Being a responsible Coton owner

Coton owners should ensure that the basic needs of the Coton such as feeding, housing, and time for grooming are satisfactory. A complete dry food diet plus either tinned or freshly cooked meat is recommended. Clean, fresh water must be provided at all times. Your Coton should have adequate bedding that is clean, dry and free from harmful objects or substances.

All Cotons thrive on human contact and attention from their owner, they may not cope well if left alone for extended periods of time. You should dedicate at least one to two hours a day with your Coton grooming him, cuddling him and playing with him. This does not include the time that you spend feeding or walking him.

The Coton has a unique coat so effective grooming is essential. See the separate guide to grooming your Coton.

Your Coton should be allowed to exercise daily. A stroll around the block is fine a few days a week but your Coton will need a longer walk at least once a week. Taking your Coton for a walk will give both you and your dog exercise and help you interact and become closer to your pet. (PLEASE SEE OUR AGE-APPROPRIATE EXERCISE UNDER HEALTH ON OUR WEBSITE)

Whenever you are in a public place with your Coton always ensure that your dog is on a lead and properly under control. Clean up after your dog when it defecates in a public place.

Always keep your Coton well-groomed and free from external parasites, fleas, and ticks.

Always take your Coton to the vet for an annual check-up and their booster vaccination. Never delay in consulting your vet if your Coton appears ill or is suffering from pain in any way.

There are many reasons why people give up their dogs or even worse abandon them. The most common reasons are:

- No time to take care of the dog;
- Owner moving away;
- Dog has not been trained properly and is causing a nuisance around the house;
- Too much work to groom and care for the dog;
- Dog is sick or old and has become a liability; and
- Loss of interest in the dog now that it is no longer a puppy.

You must consider all the aspects of ownership before committing to purchase a Coton de Tulear.

