

Thinking about breeding? Consider these points...

Though it is sweet to see a mother tend to and care for her puppies, breeding is not for the faint of heart. Let me share some experiences I have had or have heard of. These are not uncommon. So, please consider what could happen. Ask yourself if you are prepared to handle such situations?

The smaller the breed, the higher possibility of a c-section. Dams typically go into labor in the middle of the night. If there's a problem, you have to pay in cash up front \$2,000 emergency c-section. ER clinics will not treat until you pay first. Especially with first time deliveries, puppies have a tendency to get stuck in the birth canal. Dam gets tired and will no longer push. Inexperienced breeders will not know how to handle such emergency situations putting at risk losing the mom and all the puppies from what is referred to as a train wreck..

After birth, dam will often continue to bleed until puppies are weaned for 5-7 weeks after birth. She can't wear a protective diaper as she has to be able to nurse. How will this affect your flooring and furniture?

Statistically, 25-30% of toy breed puppies die. That's 1 in 4. Are you emotionally ready to hold a puppy looking into your eyes, pleading for help, getting weaker, until the last breath leaves him?

Puppies are at a critical stage for their first 4 weeks. You as a breeder must know the signs of an ill puppy and know how to treat the puppy ASAP. Such things to watch for and treat are hypoglycemia, not eating enough, neglect of the mother, milk toxicity, dehydration, worms, and more.

When puppies get sick, are you able to care for them 24/7 until they are well? I once had a litter of 5 who became sick at 3 weeks old due to milk toxicity. One by one I thought I had watched their last breath. I worked with them continuously tube feeding with special nutrients from Fri-Wed. By Wed, I was a zombie, unable to leave the home, cook for the family, etc. In fact, my family had to take over the tasks so I could rest. 5 puppies had to be fed every 3 hours which took 1- 1.5 hrs to feed.... Allowing only 1.5-2 hours of rest between feedings 24 hours a day!!!! We are pleased to say that surprisingly all lived! But it was HARD work!

Our little Maddog's One-Eyed Jack went into a coma. We rushed him to the vet who said he'd never seen one's blood sugar and stats go so low and live. He lived but near death experiences certainly faced him several times. Each one expensive and emotional.

Dam is at a high risk of infection. Placentas retained, fetus' retained, scarring internally, milk becoming toxic. We had one mom last year who developed pyometria, infection in her uterus. It nearly killed her! We never knew she was sick. The c-section and cleaning her insides up cost triple the money of a regular c-section (though not as much as an emergency).

If you are thinking you'll make good money off a litter then consider investing in something with a higher rate of return. We breed because we enjoy what we do. We are by no means getting 'rich'. The money is always put back into supplies, vet care, high quality food, nutrients, etc. Cost considerations – birthing box and supplies, washable pee pads, bitches eat triple the food during last weeks of gestation and during nursing, puppies eat a lot too, good quality kibble is expensive!!

Each life birthed into your care is your ultimate responsibility for the LIFE of the pet. This includes finding a good home. Then if you never hear from the owner again, wondering if the puppy is doing well or abused.

And as cute and adorable as puppies are, their pee and poop stink!!!! It's WORK all day long cleaning their pens and ensuring they are living in a clean environment. Living in nasty conditions breeds germs and a sickly pup.

I had adopted an experienced Maltese dam. When she had her puppies, she tried to eat them!!! I had to stay up

ALL night keeping her from eating the puppies while still encouraging her to nurse them. This is why we will not leave an expectant mom alone during the week she delivers her puppies.

In toy breeds, the umbilical cord is delicate. Breeders usually break the sacs and cut the cord themselves because the bitch is usually too rough, causing umbilical hernias. Have even heard of the mother pulling the insides of the puppy out when she tried to chew the cord into yet pulled too hard.

Parvo, kennel cough, distemper, and other viruses are so contagious that we must sterilize our shoes any time we go where other dogs may have been – vets office, pet supply stores, and parks. You can bring anything into your home from your shoes, dam pick up the germ from off the floor to take it right into the pen with the puppies. Breeders will tell you how horrible it is to watch puppies go down from parvo, etc. Parvo will kill puppies within 3 days! If they live, they can have life long affects. The first sign of illness is respiratory problems which is very contagious for the whole litter.

What will you do with a puppy who is born with a cleft palette and unable to suck? It will eventually starve to death.

When a puppy goes down, it will begin the ‘death wail’. It is a horrible experience! If you ever hear it, you’ll never forget. The hair on your arms and the back of your neck stand straight up. Your heart bleeds for the life going down as it continues to plead for its life. The puppy will look into your eyes as if begging for help. But sometimes after all effort is done, a puppy still may not make it.

Yes, breeding dogs and having puppies can be a wonderful experience, but it often will become a nightmare at the drop of a second. If you think you are ready for this, please spend quite a bit of time educating yourself with all the possibilities and know how to handle such situations. Find a breeder who’ll be a dependable mentor and friend should trouble arrive. Also, make sure you have the support of your vet as well.

If you breed one of our Shih Tzu, please let me know. I’d love to know what our off spring produces. We enjoy sharing our breeding stories and overcoming obstacles.