

One of the World's Smartest Dogs, Made by Crossing Two Breeds

Who knows if the breeders who created this ultra-smart pup knew what they were doing when they chose these 2 breeds. They ended up with not only a loving, affectionate & smart dog, they also created one of the most sought-after breeds who make wonderful additions to both families & individuals.

Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Entering the scene only in the last few decades, Aussiedoodles quickly became one of the most sought-after breeds, mainly because as a companion dog they make wonderful additions to families and individuals and can still be found through doodle rescues
- Breeding Australian shepherds with poodles will inevitably introduce a wide range of physical differences in their pups, which can mean the Aussiedoodle's size as well as color combinations can vary widely
- Attributes used to describe Aussiedoodles include loving, affectionate, fun and playful, but they're also adaptable, energetic and enjoy lots of activity and exercise
- Being the product of two different dog breeds, Aussiedoodles may carry one or more of the genetic problems common to both sets of parents, but other physical problems are common only to poodles and Aussies

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published March 15, 2018.

It's hard to say if the dog breeders who created the Aussiedoodle knew that crossing a poodle with an Australian shepherd would result in one of the smartest dogs on the planet, but they at least had a pretty good presumption. Both forebears are recognized for their uncanny brain power and perception. These dogs seem (almost) to be able to read their owners' minds, which can have several advantages.

The combination of Australian shepherds with poodles often and even inevitably introduces a wide range of physical differences in their pups. One reason is because both standard-size and miniature poodles are acceptable when breeding, which can mean the Aussiedoodle's size as well as color combinations can vary widely. In fact, no two of their pups are ever likely to look exactly the same, even from the same litter.

That's why these dogs can weigh in at a diminutive 25 pounds or as large as 75 pounds, which doesn't seem to bother either breeders or owners; it's the intelligence and temperamental assets of the breed and not a rigid standard of physical attributes that seem to be what people appreciate with this unique hybrid. According to Vetstreet:

"It's often assumed that a crossbreed will combine the best of two or more breeds, but genetics doesn't always work that way. The way genes combine and express themselves is not always subject to a breeder's control, even less so when two different breeds are crossed."¹

That said, some Aussiedoodles have tightly curled fur like a poodle; others may have straight, wiry hair, and the 12 commonly recognized colors can include variations of black, white, red, cinnamon, tan, silver, cream, blue, chocolate and combinations of the above. Although the Aussiedoodle entered the scene only in the last decade or two, they quickly became one of the most sought-after breeds. The puppies are incredibly cute, and as a companion dog they make wonderful additions to families and individuals.

Aussiedoodle: Personality Plus and Energy to Spare

Yes, Aussiedoodles have quickly become a very popular hybrid, and it's no surprise when you hear the attributes used to describe them, such as loving, affectionate, fun and playful. They're also adaptable, energetic and enjoy going on long walks in the morning as well as in the evening. DogZone adds:

*"From the Aussiedoodle's viewpoint, the presence of children in the home is a major bonus, as this is a very playful and affectionate hybrid that lives for cuddles and games ... (They have) virtually no aggressive tendencies, and (are) also usually very accepting of, and gentle with, small pets of any species."*²

For these guys, exercise is an absolute must. Experts suggest 90 minutes per day, which can include swimming, running and other vigorous pursuits. Otherwise, they may become not only hyperactive, which could lead to undesirable behavior, but also overweight, which can negatively impact their health. Those tendencies play very well into training, and you may find the process to be more of a bonding venture rather than a cumbersome, frustrating chore.

In fact, the level of their intelligence has been compared to that of a small child, so their understanding and ability to retain information will make the process a pleasure. You can give them jobs to do, such as taking in the mail or carrying groceries or laundry, and they respond happily. However, if you ever notice nipping tendencies, a throwback to their Australian shepherd heritage, it's not aggression, per se, but it must be quelled immediately.

DogZone suggests that you tell them to sit, or to at least get involved in a positive activity. In this way, they're able to discern what is and what isn't desired behavior, and comply and adapt accordingly. In addition, Aussiedoodle puppies (as well as dogs) respond best with positive reinforcement. Show them the best way to behave by rewarding him with praise, play and, when appropriate, healthy treats. As is the case with every puppy, early socialization makes for a more well-adjusted, calm and confident dog.

Considerations When Crossing Poodles and Australian Shepherds

It seems that another reason for this particular mix of dog breeds was the hope that the parental combination might produce pups that wouldn't shed as much as other breeds do, but, just like children who take after one parent more than the other, at least half the time Aussiedoodles may shed similarly to an Australian shepherd. Regarding grooming, brushing every few days is recommended, especially if their fur is straighter, which is more of an Aussie tendency.

If your dog has a curly coat like a poodle, you may need to get out the clippers every eight or 12 weeks. Poodles are often described as being hypoallergenic, but, having some of each breed in their DNA and ancestry, they may cause allergic reactions (if individuals should have such a tendency). So, if you find a breeder claiming their Aussiedoodles are hypoallergenic, there's no guarantee.

One should also keep in mind that in breeding these "designer dogs," when it's the poodle who's bred with an Australian shepherd and not the other way around, a difficult birth may become problematic, unless the poodle is a standard size. As DogZone observes:

*"Generally speaking, matings involve Poodle fathers and Aussie mothers in order to avoid birthing difficulties ... Multi-generational breeding is rare, meaning two pedigrees are normally crossed, rather than practicing hybrid-to-hybrid breeding."*³

Health Watch: Aussiedoodles in Regard to Their Parentage

It's wise to ensure that the Aussiedoodle puppy you may be eyeing as an addition for your household has been checked so he or she doesn't carry one or more of the genetic problems common to both sets of parents.

A few health issues known to strike both poodles and Australian shepherds, and consequently Aussiedoodles, include progressive retinal atrophy (PRA), cataracts and hip dysplasia (malformation of the hip's ball and socket joint). Individually, these breeds have their own health concerns. For Australian shepherds,⁴ Vetstreet lists several:

- Hip dysplasia
- Colobomas (part of the eye structure is missing)
- Detached retinas
- Epilepsy
- Persistent pupillary membrane (tiny strands of fetal tissue crossing over the iris)
- Collie eye anomaly
- Cataracts
- Multiple drug sensitivity (MDS — sensitivity to certain drugs)

Poodles also have health concerns, but it often depends on the poodle breed, as well — standard, miniature and toy varieties, for instance — which may be translated to their Aussiedoodle puppies. Vetstreet explains these as well:

"Addison's disease and Cushing's syndrome are flip sides of the same coin. In dogs with Addison's disease, the adrenal glands don't produce enough of the hormone cortisol. The dogs become lethargic, depressed and intolerant of stress, and they may have digestive problems. Some dogs can have an acute crisis, necessitating hospitalization. Lifelong treatment consists of giving medication.

*In dogs with Cushing's syndrome, the adrenal glands produce too much cortisol. Symptoms include weight gain, panting, excessive thirst and hunger, bladder infections, and urinating in the house even though the dog was previously house-trained. Cushing's is usually managed with lifelong medication, but surgery is sometimes necessary."*⁵

Health problems poodles can have may translate to their puppies. These may include:

- Hypothyroidism
- Gastric dilatation volvulus (aka bloat)

- Von Willebrand disease (blood clotting disorder)
- Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease (reduced blood supply and disintegration of the thigh bone)
- Luxating patellas (or floating kneecaps)
- Sebaceous adenitis (causing skin problems and fur loss)
- Glaucoma
- Cancer, such as insulinoma and hemangiosarcoma

In addition, Aussiedoodles are susceptible to pancreatitis, an inflammation-based disorder of the digestive organ, which occurs most often in dogs who are overweight. The Aussiedoodle is expected to have a lifespan of 10 or 12 years. To find your perfect pet, check (and keep checking) your local shelter or pet adoption agencies, because chances are there will be one there waiting for the perfect family to become a part of.

Sources and References

¹ [Vetstreet 2001-2018 - Aussiedoodle](#)

^{2,3} [DogZone 2016-2017](#)

⁴ [Vetstreet 2001-2018 - Australian Sheperd](#)

⁵ [Vetstreet 2001-2018 - Poodle](#)
