

Brief History of the Great Dane

The Great Dane (Deutsche Dogge or German Mastiff), dates back to 3000 B.C. in Egypt. In Egypt there were paintings of dogs very similar to the Great Dane. There are many other findings of the breed's early history around the world, but the Great Dane was given its name by Buffon while traveling to Denmark. At this time the Great Dane was known as the Boar Hound, because of its use as a boar hunter.

Body of a Dane

Average heights and weights for Great Danes:

Height for males: 30-34 inches

Weight for males: 120-200lbs

Height for females: 28-32 inches

Weight for females: 100-130lbs



The average life span of a Great Dane is about 10 years but some can live longer at 12-13 years old.

Coat color types that are typical in Danes are blue, black, fawn, brindle, harlequin, mantle, merle, white and pie-bald. Out of those only 6 can be shown (harlequin, mantle, fawn, brindle, blue, and black).

Grooming is minimal since they have short coats. They may get cold in the winter, so should not be left outdoors for extended periods.

Temperament

Great Danes is a gentle giant. It loves everyone and needs to be around people. They don't make good outside dogs and need to be indoors with their family.

Danes are good with children. Your toddler will get knocked down on a regular basis, will get stepped on and pawed occasionally and tail whipped. And yes, this may cause scratching and bruising. An adult is generally a wiser match to young children than a pup, having settled down their 100-170 pound selves. And remember, children should ALWAYS be supervised around ANY dog.

Breeding

Breeding should be left to the professionals. The only reason to breed is to better the breed. As a rescue group we see lots of tragic stories from those who think they are ready to breed and they end up in the shelters. Breeding takes lots of work, time, and there truly is not a profit out of it if you are doing it right.

There are many tests that need to be done to insure that both parents have good health lines. Such tests include OFA hips & elbows, echocardiograms of hearts at 2 yrs & 5 yrs, thyroid panels, CERF, and CHIC.

If you are thinking of breeding, please think of these things:

1. You must make sure that both the Sire & Dam have good temperament and are in good health with no history of congenital problems.
2. Make sure you have at least \$1,000 set aside, in case you need to take the Dam to the vet for a C section.
3. You must have a special area designated for the mom & pups. This area must be cleaned every few hours to avoid diseases.
4. When puppies are born, you must take them to the vet to be checked out and have dewclaws removed.
5. You must make sure that you have lots of time, which you will spend feeding and cleaning.
6. You must give up sleep for at least a week, because you need to supervise mom and pups, to make sure mom doesn't step or lay on a puppy.
7. You must screen all the people who are interested in buying a puppy.
8. Make sure those who buy a puppy know about special needs of the breed.
9. Most importantly, when you sell a puppy, make sure the buyers sign a contract that says that in the event they can no longer care for the dog, they will return it to YOU.

Some things you might not have known.

Counter surfing- this is when a Dane comes up to a counter space and wipes their face across it. Anything you had up there is now your Danes. Most Danes can rest their head on your counter so make sure it is clutter free and nothing harmful is up there to eat or swallow.

Slobbering- can be massive. Since Danes have big jowls that hang many of them produce lots and lots of slobber. When drinking many of them hold that water in their mouth and drop it out of their jowls as soon as they leave the water dish. Prepare to get slobber on just about anything.

Teenage Stage- this is the stage were some dogs like to become defiant and destructive. They tend to “forget” their training, potty in the house, and you just think man this isn't the dog I signed up for. The length of this time varies between dogs but with time it will go away. Like any child they try to test limits.

Happy Tail- is when the Great Dane wags his tail so hard that he hits the tail so hard that the end of the tail will burst open and then blood sprays everywhere. This condition sometimes results in docking the tail in order to resolve the problem.

Zoomies- Great Danes will run for approximately 2-5 minutes 2-3 times a day at full speed. We refer to these bursts of energy as “Zooming”. This is normal behavior for a Great Dane, and once you have seen a Zoomie you will never forget it. Just be sure you are out of the Great Dane’s path when they are Zooming, because you could be accidentally knocked over. Once the Zoomies are over, your Great Dane will probably flop down totally exhausted for the next couple of hours.

Merle Danes should NOT be bred- this is due to their genetic conformation. They tend to produce deaf and blind dogs.

Feeding

Food types is your decision. Usually a good quality dog food that is 22-25% protein and 15-18% fat is good. Puppy food or growth formula foods should NEVER EVER be fed to Dane puppies. They grow fast enough without the encouragement that growth and puppy formulas provide. Feeding a Dane growth or puppy food is asking for bone and growth problems. A growing puppy should eat 4-7 cups 2-3 times a day, and an adult should do fine at 6-8 cups a day. These are just estimates, it depends on your dog, and brand of food.



Danes should be fed with their food raised off of the floor. There are commercially made raised feeders that can be purchased at pet supply stores and through mail order pet supply catalogs. Or you can feed them with the bowl on a kitchen chair or stool, etc. This helps to lessen the air intake during feeding and also will prevent the dog from straining his back at mealtime. (hey...it’s a long way down to the floor!). You can also decrease the risk of stomach torsion by limiting activity for at least 60-90 minutes following a meal, and 30 minutes prior to a meal.



Exercise

Daily exercise is good for any dog. Great Danes only need a moderate amount of exercise. A good long walk, 10-15 min throw of a ball or stick, or a good play with others is good.

Obedience

Obedience training is recommended. They are easily trainable as long as you are willing to do your part. It is a great bonding experience while telling your Dane you are the Alfa. An energetic 130lb dogs that towers over a child and can easily rest their head on the dinner table must have some manners.

Socialization

Socialization is good for dogs, and starting as a puppy is even better. Taking your dogs for a walk in the neighborhood, meeting new people, going to the dog park helps the dog learn how to interact with its environment. This lessens fear of new dogs and people.

Crates

We recommend that you purchase a crate for your Great Dane. A crate gives your newest family member a feeling of security and a place for your Great Dane to stay when you are gone. There will be an adjustment period and you need to be sure that your Great Dane is safe while you are away from home, and that your Great Dane feels secure while you are away from home. We also recommend that the crate be kept in a living area where the Great Dane can see the family. You can purchase a crate at your local pet store. Most Danes require a colossal size crate.



Health

Bloat (Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus)- is the number one killer of Great Danes and they are the #1 breed at risk for bloat. In deep-chested breeds, the stomach distend, then has a tendency to rotate, which cuts off the blood supply to various parts of the body, as well as shutting down digestion. This condition is painful as well as life threatening and can kill a Dane in a matter of hours. Some owners consider surgery called prophylactic gastropexy (tack) which can help prevent some of the more serious aspects of bloat. Discuss this with your veterinarian.

HOD (Hypertrophic Osteodystrophy) and Pano (Panosteitis)- these are painful conditions of the bones that occur during the rapid growth phase of puppyhood causing lameness and general malaise. HOD is the more serious one and can be deadly while Pano is usually self-limiting and may not need treatment.

Hip Dysplasia- is an inherited disease with multi-factorial expression. Clinically the disease may be seen as a simply poor rear end conformation to such malformation of the hip joint that the dog becomes cripple.

Arthritis- is another joint problem that can happen to Danes. As they get older or if they are overweight these problems can occur.