

# Chihuahua

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

The Chihuahua is one of the most popular, and smallest, household breeds. There are many theories about the origin of the Chihuahua, but one thing is for sure, he has been around for a centuries.

## History

Tracing all the way back to the Toltecs and Aztecs, the Chihuahua has tremendous popularity, in part as a result of being involved in popular television commercials. The Chihuahua today is smaller than his ancestors. It is believed that the original dog was crossed with the Chinese Crested when the Spaniards came across to the New World. There is the theory that the Chihuahua was originally mute and was used by the Aztecs for helping their spirit into the underworld.

## Living with your Chihuahua

The Chihuahua is an indoor dog. He is prone to seek heat, and hates the cold. Chihuahuas are known to become attached to one person, and can be hesitant with new people. The Chihuahua tries to be a protective dog, but due to size, his bark is bigger than his bite. Although he is a small dog, the Chihuahua likes to burn energy and enjoys taking short walks. Chihuahuas are sometimes temperamental, and are occasionally known to bark. The Chihuahua's saucy and alert expression and high energy level create a good choice for those who want a toy breed with watchdog capabilities.



## Interesting Breed Facts:

**Popularity:** 12th in 2008; with 15,985 registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC).

**First recognized as a breed:** The AKC accepted the Chihuahua as a breed in 1904.

**AKC Grouping:** Toy.

**Size:** Both males and females are approximately 6"-9" at the shoulder and weigh 6 lbs. or less.

**Appearance:** The Chihuahua is a small breed with an "apple-shaped" head and big eyes that can be either dark or light colored, depending on coat color. The ears are large and held upright. The legs are muscular and the feet are small and dainty. The tail is moderately long and can be straight or slightly curly. The coat of the Chihuahua can be either smooth or long. The smooth coat is soft and glossy. The hair of the long coat variety is soft, and can be straight or curly. The ears of the long coat are fringed and the tail hair is full and long. The feet, legs, and neck are feathered on a long coat Chihuahua also. The Chihuahua can be solid colored, marked, or



splashed.

**#1  
preventable  
health  
problem:**

Obesity is a concern, so be sure that your dog receives proper diet and plenty of daily exercise.

**Preferences:**

The Chihuahua is somewhat playful and requires a fair amount of attention, which he prefers to initiate. The Chihuahua has been known to choose a favorite human and might direct most of his attention toward him/her and might do best in a home with other small dogs.

**Best features:**

Favored as loyal companions, this breed may also serve as an excellent watchdog. Barking or growling at strangers is not uncommon due to the Chihuahua's suspicious nature, but will eventually warm up to strangers.

**Biggest  
challenge to  
owners:**

Training a Chihuahua may be difficult at times. In order to prevent possible behavior problems as an adult, be sure to begin training your dog early in puppyhood.

Check out all of our toy breed items [here](#).