Great Dane

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

The Great Dane is not from Denmark, as the name implies, but was bred in Germany to hunt wild boar and, in fact, its German name is "Deutsche Dogge," meaning "German Mastiff." Dogs resembling the Great Dane, however, were described in Chinese literature as early as the 12th century BC!

Many people think it would be fun to own a big dog. However, remember that most books on Great Danes caution that with a big dog comes big responsibility. This is true. Puppy mischief that may be tolerable with smaller breeds, such as digging and chewing, take on a whole different picture with a 100-lb puppy. And as with all giant breeds, your Dane will be a puppy until he is at least three years of age.

The Great Dane does not bark much yet makes an excellent watchdog. He only becomes aggressive if circumstances require and his size alone deters most unwanted visitors. Although not extremely active indoors, he must have long daily walks and preferably a large yard to romp in.

Interesting Breed Facts:

Popularity:	22nd in 2008; with 8,994 registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC).
First recognized as a breed:	The Great Dane Club of America was formed in 1889 and became the fourth breed club to join the AKC.
AKC Grouping:	Working.
Size:	Height at the shoulder: males: 30"-37", females: 28"-34". Weight: males: 120-200 lbs., females: 100-130 lbs.

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Appearance:	The Great Dane gives an impression of great size and powerful muscle. Eyes are deep set and dark; head is rectangular and long, with a square jaw. Cropped ears are carried erect. More and more Dane owners are opting to leave ears uncropped, now allowed in the AKC breed standard. Uncropped ears are high-set, medium-sized, and folded forward. AKC-allowable colors are Fawn, Brindle, Blue (steel blue), Black, Harlequin (white base coat with black patches), and Mantle (black and white with solid black "blanket").
#1 preventable health problem:	Growth problems associated with improper nutrition. Look for responsible breeders and owners of other healthy Danes and ask what they feed.

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Preferences:	Companionship with his loving family.
Best features:	Dependable, brave, loyal, and loving.
Biggest challenge to owners:	Control. Obedience training is a must for this breed to prevent undesired problem behaviors during adulthood.

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