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**Working**

## St. Bernard

The national dog of Switzerland, the St Bernard is named after the monk who, in the 10th Century, founded a hospice to care for travellers on the perilous routes through the Swiss Alps. The first dogs were Alpine Mastiffs, initially used to guard property, but with the discovery of their rescue abilities their role was changed. These dogs were the ancestors of the modern St Bernard.

By the 18th Century the role of the dogs had changed and they were being used for rescue work, locating lost and stranded travellers. The monks were using new blood to develop bigger dogs and it is thought that the Newfoundland and the Bloodhound might have contributed to the new type. Certainly the dogs became larger and longer coated. The outcrossing was disputed by some of the monks as they felt that a longer coat would ice up, so some of stock was purposely kept which remained close to the original short-coated type. Hence the breed still has long coated and smooth coated specimens today. The breed retained the name of Alpine Mastiffs well into the 19th Century, and it was not until 1888 that the modern title of St Bernard was adopted.

The traditional view of the rescuing St Bernard with a cask of brandy attached to his collar is a romantic and fanciful one, created by the famous Victorian artist Edwin Landseer, who painted the first two St Bernard's to arrive in London.

Breed Group	Working
Vulnerable Breed	No
Size	Large
How much exercise?	Up to 1 hour per day
Length of coat	Short
How much grooming?	More than once a week
Supposedly sheds?	Yes
Town or Country	Either
Type of home	Large House
Minimum garden size	Small/Medium
Lifespan	Under 10 Years

## Health Information

You may be aware that some breeds of dog and their crosses can be susceptible to inherited disease. Of course you want to be sure that the dog you choose is as healthy as possible, and you would like to know that it has not inherited any undesirable disease-causing genes from its parents. There is some help in that DNA tests for diseases in purebred dogs are available for some conditions in some breeds, but there are not very many such tests just yet! There are also, however, a number of clinical veterinary screening schemes that dog breeders can use to increase the probability of producing healthy puppies.

Details of the various screening schemes, both veterinary and DNA, that are available to breeders in the UK can be found at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth)

Potential dog owners should be aware that, at present, the application of various health screening results to breeding programmes is not always straightforward, and breeders may make choices for various reasons. A responsible breeder though, will always be willing to discuss relevant health issues with you. Breed clubs are often useful sources of breed-specific information.

## What Screening is relevant for the St. Bernard?

Kennel Club Assured Breeders must use the following screening schemes for sires and dams BVA/KC

- BVA/KC Hip Dysplasia Scheme

Kennel Club Assured Breeders are strongly recommended to use the following screening schemes and/or advice for sires and dams

- Bitches not to produce a litter under two years of age

The list above is not necessarily comprehensive. Breed clubs and experienced breeders are useful sources of information on health issues in the breed. All breeds have a Breed Health Coordinator.

## Breeding Restrictions

The Kennel Club will not accept an application to register a litter when:

- 1) The dam has already whelped 4 litters (as of the 1st January 2012 the limit changed from 6 litters to 4 litters). As of this date the Kennel Club will no longer register any further litters from any bitch which our records show has already whelped 4 litters. Therefore for any litter born on or after the 1st January 2012, the system will automatically check to see how many previous litters the Kennel Club has an account of. Where the number previously recorded is 4 or more, the application will be rejected, or
- 2) The dam has already reached the age of 8 years at the date of whelping, (relief from this restriction may be considered normally provided an application is made prior to the mating, the proposed dam has previously whelped at least one other registered litter, and the application is supported by veterinary evidence as to the suitability of the bitch involved in the proposed whelping), or
- 3) The dam was under one year old at the time of mating, or
- 4) The offspring are the result of any mating between father and daughter, mother and son or brother and sister, save in exceptional circumstances or for scientifically proven welfare reasons, or
- 5) (From 1st January 2012) The dam has already had two litters delivered by caesarean section, save for scientifically

proven welfare reasons and this only normally provided the application is made prior to the mating, or

6) The dam was not resident at a UK address at the date of whelping.

There are further Kennel Club Rules and Regulations that may prevent a litter from being registered; the full Kennel Club Rules and Regulations are contained in the Kennel Club Year Book.

## Breed Specific Breeding Restrictions

### St. Bernard Clubs

Name	Telephone
Eastern St Bernard Club	01636 613 523
English St Bernard Club	01773 872535
St Bernard Club Of Scotland	01563 520 897
United St Bernard Club	01282 452561

### St. Bernard Rescue Organisations

Name	Telephone
Saving Saints Rescue UK	07808 055408
Saving Saints Rescue UK	07759 516241
Saving Saints Rescue UK	07949 055540
St Bernard Trust	0121 445 2965
St Bernard Trust	07905 141831
St Bernard Trust	07825 020565
St Bernard Trust	07966 927219
St Bernard Trust	01797 361313
St Bernard Trust	07734 034407
St Bernard Trust	01642 868 097