



The Soggy Dog Blog: Males vs. Females

New clients of ours sometimes struggle when trying to decide on which gender Lab they should choose. Sometimes they are influenced by dogs they have had in the past: If they previously had a male, this time they might want to try a female. Or, conversely, they will *always* have males because of the positive feelings they've had for their dogs in the past. Other times, we see that their decision is being made by a series of assumptions and myths. We'd like to dispel a few of those here and really break down the difference for you on male versus female Labrador Retrievers.

Size Matters The biggest difference between male and female Labrador Retrievers is simply size. Males generally run 10-20 pounds heavier than females. The AKC standard for a female Labrador Retriever weight is from the low 50's to the low 60-pound range, whereas males fall more into the 70-80 pound range. That isn't to say that either can't be a little more or less and still be a healthy dog. Our fox red stud Pappy Boyington is about 60 pounds, and our original founding females were over 60 pounds. If you hunt snow geese, choosing a male dog that has an easier time retrieving these large birds may be the better choice. However, if you are an avid waterfowler, having a more petite female to share the boat or blind with may be preferable. The most notable difference between male and female Labs, or the difference that is closest to certain, is their size.

Bathroom Break Unfixed males, or males that were neutered later than puppyhood, have an interesting habit of "browsing" the yard. Sniff this tree, sniff that tree, pee a little here, spot a little there. This can be a lengthy process (and an annoying one when it's ten below outside). As the Charmin commercial says, they "Enjoy the Go." Females are more down to business when it comes to potty time. (They aren't out there combing their fur and reapplying lipstick.) The easiest way to level the playing field here is, of course, to get your male dog neutered at the earliest age your vet recommends. From there, both genders are quickly outside and back in and the only difference you'll note is their stance (although we have seen males squat!)

Just Drive One of the more common myths we hear is that one gender (usually males) are "known" to have more drive. This isn't true. Drive is determined by genetics. Your dog's bloodlines are what's going to make him go ga-ga over geese. Both the male and female pups in a litter have the same parentage and therefore the same bloodlines and therefore the same drive. All of the pups in a litter are either going to want to hunt –or not. Certainly, all animals have their own unique personalities: littermates are not carbon-copies of each other. But generally speaking, drive is determined by genetics and an entire litter has the same genetics. The puppies with X chromosomes have the same drive as those with Y.

She's Got Personality So does he. Both male and female Labs can have loving, nurturing personalities. Our giant stud dog Pickett is one of the most affectionate dogs you'll ever meet. But he's a machine in the field. And guess what? His mother was a lover too. We breed our dogs first and foremost to have a pleasant disposition. Our pups get their dispositions from their parents. And just like drive, personality is not segregated to one gender in the litter.

So which gender should you choose? It depends on your circumstances if size is an issue, as size is the only material issue typically at hand. If size isn't an issue, you can really go either way. If you have always had one gender dog in the past and you were happy with that, there's absolutely no harm in letting your heart choose the same. Either male or female, if you're working with an experienced, reputable breeder, you will likely be overjoyed with the dog you pick.