

## The Chihuahua

This is the oldest breed on the American continent and the smallest breed in the world. Native to Mexico, nonetheless it seems to have been introduced by the Chinese. It was only brought to Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. The Chihuahua is named after the Mexican state of Chihuahua where he was brought to the rest of the world by travelers. This breed is believed to have been sacred to the Pre-Columbian Indian nations. The most valued dogs weigh less than 2-1/4 pounds. Some can even stand on all fours in a person's palm! There is a longhaired variety that is judge separately, but is essentially the same except for the coat. The Chihuahua is a popular, economical companion dog. The Height is from 6-9 inches tall, and its weight is from 2-6 pounds. Because of his short nose, the Chihuahua tend to wheeze and snore. His prominent eyes are susceptible to corneal dryness and secondary glaucoma. Prone to slipped stifle, gum problems, colds, stress, and rheumatism. Don't let him lick or eat toxic products, such as fertilizer, chocolate, or antifreeze. Feed lightly as it tends to gain weight. Chihuahua puppies are born with large heads, frequently necessitating cesarean deliveries by a skilled veterinarian. They are vulnerable to fractures and other accidents in puppy hood. Some of the breed has a molera (soft spot), an unclosed section of the skull, which can remain open throughout life. This makes the dog prone to injury. The Chihuahua hates the cold and may shiver. It will tolerate and even appreciate a warm sweater on cooler days. They are good little dogs for apartment life. Although it is tempting to carry these dainty creatures about, they will keep fitter if taken for walks. A body harness is safer than a collar. Don't think that just because he is small he should be confined to a small space (unless, it is an extremely small puppy which requires confinement to prevent hypoglycemia). Life expectancy is 15 or more years. The smooth, shorthaired coat should be gently brushed occasionally or simply wiped over with a damp cloth. The long coat should be brushed daily or every few days with a soft bristle brush. Bathe both types about once per month, taking care not to get water in the ears (we recommend using Epi-Otic in the ears after bathing). Check the ears regularly and keep the nails trimmed. This breed is an average shedder. The Chihuahua is a tiny dog with an apple-shaped head and short pointed muzzle. It has round, large, very dark eyes, sometimes dark ruby or luminous in color. The trademark large ears should be held erect. The body is cobby (stout), longer than it is tall, and the tail is sickle-shaped—curled over the back or to the side. Colors include fawn, sand, chestnut, silver, and steel blue, but any color is accepted, including black/tan and the parti-colors. The dog is more robust than he looks, with a level back, and legs coming down straight and square. The Chihuahua is a good companion dog. Courageous, extremely lively, proud, and enterprising, it gives and demands affection. Bold and saucy, it moves swiftly to avoid being stepped on. Chihuahua's are strong-willed, intensely loyal, and become very attached to their owners, event to the point of jealousy. They like to lick their owner's faces. It is undeniably suspicious of people except for its owner. When strangers are present, it follows its owner's every move, keeping as close as possible. For some, they may be slightly difficult to train, but they are intelligent and learn quickly, and respond well to proper, gentle (positive reinforcement) training. This breed may snap at teasing children, after all it is too tiny to get away. The Chihuahua must resort to his sharp teeth in self defense. It is not recommended for small children. He can be noisy and may require patience to housebreak. Many owners simply paper-train this breed. Be sure to socialize your Chihuahua as to avoid excessive aggressiveness with other dogs as well as being reserved with other strangers. They tend to be fairly dog aggressive. Chihuahuas generally recognize their own breed, but sometimes disapprove of other breeds. However, a well-socialized Chihuahua can be friendly with strangers and other dogs.