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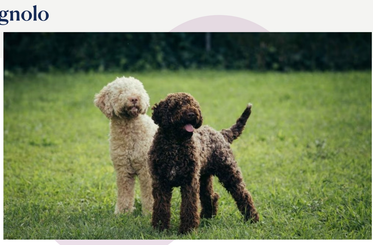
Lagotto Romagnolo

By Zack Newman. Reviewed by Bari J. Morrison, DVM on Jul. 24, 2023



IN THIS ARTICLE

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The Lagotto Romagnolo is an ancient Italian water dog bred to use their sensitive snout to sniff out truffles. But even if you are not in the market for fancy tubers, Lagotto dogs are sweet and attentive pups who, according to the Lagotto Romagnolo Club of America (LRCA), are eager to please and easy to train.

The small- to medium-size breed is powerfully built. A full-grown Lagotto Romagnolo stands 16–19 inches tall and weighs 24–35 pounds, with iconic curly locks that prevent water from soaking through their coat. According to the Lagotto Romagnolo Club of Canada (LRCC), the dogs are fantastic swimmers and can adapt to almost any lifestyle with enough exercise and mental engagement.

Caring for a Lagotto Romagnolo

A Lagotto can be remarkably shy and requires extensive socialization as a puppy, according to the LRCA, to set them up for a lifetime of companionship where they are ready for anything. When Lagotto Romagnolo puppies are exposed to new people, animals, and environments early, they thrive.

Lagotti Romagnoli (the proper plural of Lagotto Romagnolo) do best in active homes where they get lots of attention. They need to be mentally stimulated; if they grow bored, they can become destructive in an effort to keep themselves busy.

Lagotto Romagnolo Health Issues

Lagotti Romagnoli are typically healthy dogs who live a very long life—it's not abnormal for them to live to be 15–17 years old! But, like all dogs, they can develop some health conditions over the course of their life.

Storage Disease

Storage disease, sometimes called Lagotto storage disease and lysosomal storage disease, is a neurological ailment that can be seen in Lagotto Romagnolo puppies and dogs under 4 years old. It's a progressive, breed-specific condition that leads to behavior changes, including:

- Failure to thrive
- Restlessness
- Depression
- Aggression

Many dogs with severe storage disease are humanely euthanized due to the poor quality of life. Reputable Lagotto Romagnolo breeders test their dogs for this condition and only breed dogs who are LSD carriers to dogs who do not have the gene.

Benign Familial Juvenile Epilepsy

Another genetic disease commonly found in a Lagotto dog is juvenile epilepsy. Seizures are usually observed in puppies as young as five weeks old, according to the Lagotto Romagnolo Club of Great Britain.

The ailment will usually resolve by the time the Italian water dogs are eight to 13 weeks old and some may not display any noticeable symptoms. Testing is important for knowing if your dog is a carrier for juvenile epilepsy.

Hyperuricosuria

Hyperuricosuria is a condition that makes dogs more likely to have kidney stones due to higher levels of uric acid in their urine. It is tough to treat and can require surgery to remove the bladder/kidney stones. Carriers of the disease should not breed Lagotto puppies.

Cerebellar Abiotrophy

Cerebellar abiotrophy is a degenerative disease in the brain that causes dogs to have trouble controlling their movements or keeping their balance. Dogs with the ailment have a much shorter life expectancy and require additional care.

What To Feed a Lagotto Romagnolo

Lagotti Romagnoli, as with all dogs, do best when fed a well-balanced diet approved by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). The food must be formulated for your dog's current life stage: puppy, adult, or senior.

How To Feed a Lagotto Romagnolo

Lagotto dogs should be fed twice a day. Lagotto Romagnolo puppies need to eat more frequently—about three or four times a day on a consistent schedule.

How Much Should You Feed a Lagotto Romagnolo?

Your AAFCO-approved dog food will give you guidance on how much to feed your Lagotto based on your pup's weight. But the best way to determine portions is to talk to your vet; they can give you a recommendation based on your dog's age, lifestyle, and health history.

Pet parents should resist the adorable begging from these Italian water dogs because obesity can lead to additional health problems, such as joint issues.

Nutritional Tips for Lagotti Romagnoli

As long as your pup is eating a well-balanced diet, they shouldn't need any supplements. Never give your dog supplements without speaking to your vet first.

Behavior and Training Tips for Lagotti Romagnoli

Lagotto Romagnolo Personality and Temperament

According to the LRCA, Lagotti are active but not *hyper*. This breed is an avid problem-solver and eager to please the people they love. They enjoy learning new things and being active, and one of their favorite pastimes is going for a swim.

Lagotti Romagnoli do great in a family environment and don't necessarily need to be digging up truffles to be happy. But they do need to keep their smart minds sharp with lots of mental stimulation.

Lagotto Romagnolo Behavior

This breed requires robust companionship, be it with a human or other dogs. The curious pups tend to bark, and they love to dig. Keeping your Lagotto dog well-exercised can help curb these undesirable behaviors.

Lagotto Romagnolo Training

Lagotto Romagnolo dogs relish an opportunity to train and are eager to please. As with all dogs, they do best with positive reinforcement training where they are rewarded for good behavior.

But a pet parent should know that a Lagotto's intelligence is a double-edged sword: They need regular and robust stimulation and training to prevent them from constantly using their brain to thwart any dog-proofing measures (like digging their way under your fence).

Fun Activities for Lagotti Romagnoli

- Agility
- Nose work
- Dock diving
- Tracking
- Swimming
- Hiking
- Hunting

Lagotto Romagnolo Grooming Guide

Thanks to the Lagotto Romagnolo's curly coat, these pups don't shed much and are considered "hypoallergenic" dogs. And while there is no such thing as a 100% hypoallergenic dog, Lagotti Romagnoli can be a good fit for some people with allergies.

Skin Care

Lagotto dogs don't require any special skin care. But because these are active dogs who love to be outside, you'll need to check them for ticks, burrs, and anything else they may have picked up on their last adventure.

Coat Care

Lagotti Romagnoli have curly fur that gives them a teddy bear-like appearance. But these curls can easily become matted, so regular brushing with a metal comb is a must. Bathe them up to once a month, as needed.

Eye Care

Keep the hair around your Lagotto's eyes trimmed. This ensures your dog's vision isn't obstructed, and it also prevents the fur from causing irritation or other eye issues.

If you notice changes in your dog's eyes, such as cloudiness, contact your vet.

Ear Care

Ear hair can flourish in Lagotti, so pet parents need to trim it regularly. This will reduce the likelihood of ear infections.

It's also important for pet parents to clean their dog's ears whenever they spend time in water. If moisture becomes trapped in the canal during a swim or a bath, this can cause a painful infection. Contact your vet if you notice redness, odor, or debris in your Lagotto Romagnolo's ears.

Considerations for Pet Parents

The perfect home for a Lagotto Romagnolo is one that is active and able to continuously put energy toward their dog. The breed requires constant mental and physical stimulation; without an outlet, they might become bored and destructive. Lagotti thrive in a family that can easily incorporate the pup into their routine with water sports or hiking.

Lagotto Romagnolo FAQs

Are Lagotto Romagnolo dogs hypoallergenic?

Lagotto Romagnolo dogs are considered to be hypoallergenic, even though there's really no such thing. That said, their curly coat can make them a good fit for some people with dog allergies. Before bringing home a Lagotto Romagnolo puppy, spend time with the breed to see how your allergies react.

Are Lagotto Romagnolo dogs low-maintenance?

These Italian truffle dogs are not low-maintenance. Lagotti Romagnoli require regular mental stimulation and exercise to be at their happiest (and least destructive!). Also, their gorgeous coat requires regular upkeep.

How much does a Lagotto Romagnolo dog cost?

The Lagotto Romagnolo price can range from $1,500 to $2,500. However, the Lagotto Romagnolo Club of America operates a rescue non-profit that works to help displaced Lagotto dogs find families.

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