

BREED PREDISPOSITION TO DISEASE IN THE BEAGLE CROSSES

We all want quality of life for our pets and one way of assuring this is to be aware of genetic or inherited problems. Certain breeds are at risk for certain diseases. This doesn't mean that all dogs of a certain breed will develop these problems nor does it exclude them from other diseases, however, it does help to tailor your pet's medical needs and preventive health care program.

Many conditions simply require us as pet owners to be aware of the potential. Often simple modifications to diet, exercise and lifestyle can be made to maximize quality of life. Knowing your pets' risk for genetic or inherited diseases and what can be done to prevent or slow the progression of these disorders, can help them live the happiest and healthiest life possible.

Pulmonic Stenosis: As part of normal circulation in the body, the right side of the heart (the right ventricle) pumps blood to the lungs to receive oxygen. The oxygenated blood goes back to the left side of the heart from which it is pumped out to the rest of the body. Blood flows from the right ventricle of the heart through the pulmonic valve into the pulmonary artery and thence to the lungs. With pulmonic stenosis, there is partial obstruction of normal blood flow, most commonly due to a malformation of the pulmonic valve ("pulmonic valve dysplasia") but the abnormality may be immediately above or below the valve as well. The effect of this partial obstruction is to force the heart to work harder to pump blood to the lungs. The extent to which a dog will be affected depends on the degree of narrowing (stenosis) of the valve area. With severe stenosis the dog will likely develop congestive heart failure due to the increased workload of the heart.

Recommendation: You may not know your dog has a problem until your veterinarian hears a heart murmur. Yearly and bi-annually physical examinations are the best way to detect potential abnormalities. You may see signs in your dog related to heart disease, such as fainting or fatigue with exercise. When you see these signs you should contact your veterinarian who will listen carefully to try to determine the location of the murmur and to differentiate it from an "innocent" murmur (in young dogs) that disappears by about 6 months of age. If the murmur is significant, your veterinarian will suggest further tests such as a chest x-ray, electrocardiogram, and cardiac ultrasound to help determine the cause, and to see what changes if any have already occurred in the heart as a result of the defect.

Periodontal Disease: Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, with 80% of dogs being affected. The health of your pet's teeth is directly related to the length and quality of your pet's life. Your pet's oral health affects all body systems. When the teeth become covered in plaque and tartar, bacteria take up residence in this plaque and pockets of bacteria begin to form under the gums damaging ligaments that hold the teeth in place. Any pocket formation under the gum line is painful. The bacteria in these pockets enter the blood stream and travel to organs such as the heart, lungs, liver, spleen and kidney causing premature damage to these organs. A healthy mouth will add years of life expectancy for your pet!

Recommendations: Have your dog's teeth professionally examined and cleaned once each year. Home care, including tooth brushing, oral gel or T/D diet can help immensely.

Foreign body ingestion: Beagle crosses tend to be extremely food motivated and will eat all manner of things hoping they might be food. Sometimes an object is able to pass through the stomach and intestines, and eventually exit the body along with the stools, but many times the object gets stuck.

When this happens, emergency surgery is often needed to remove the object, sometimes along with damaged portions of the stomach or intestines.

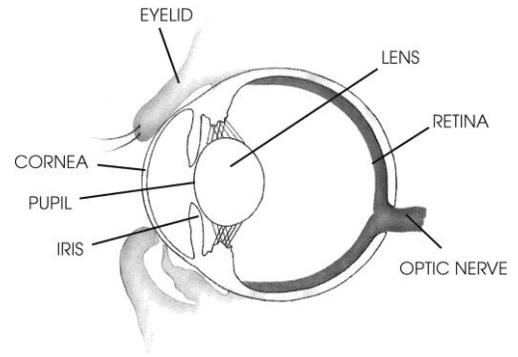
People are usually shocked when their pet eats something weird, but puppies explore their world and play by using their mouths – they don't have hands. Many times they swallow things accidentally while playing with them. Some objects taste or smell like food, such as a Popsicle stick.

Recommendation: Pets should always be supervised as you would a toddler. Don't let them have access to things they could chew on or eat. Keep cabinets and doors closed, pick up after yourself and your family members, crate train or gate off rooms if need be. If something turns up missing, call immediately so we can decide whether to have your pet vomit whatever it was back up again right away. If your healthy, active pet suddenly starts vomiting or acting strange, call us.

Glaucoma is an extremely painful disease that rapidly leads to blindness. The eyeball is a tough, rubbery ball containing fluid. Cells within the eye itself produce the fluid that then drains back out of the eye via tiny drainage channels. When the fluid cannot drain out as fast as it is being produced it builds up, causing stretching and swelling of the eyeball. The fluid pressure is not only very painful, but it literally crushes the delicate cells lining the retina, quickly leading to blindness. In Beagle crosses glaucoma can start between the ages of two and five.

Symptoms include a squinting, watery eye; cloudiness of the cornea (the clear window at the front of the eye); and the whites of the eyes may look red. In severe cases the eye may look swollen or bulging. Glaucoma is a medical emergency. If you see symptoms don't wait.

Recommendation: Annual glaucoma screening for all adult and senior Beagle crosses. The test we perform is called an intraocular pressure, or IOP. It is quick and inexpensive, and could save your pet's sight.



Intervertebral disc disease, IVDD: this condition is common in dogs with long backs and short legs, though it can occur in other breeds as well. It commonly affects the neck or lower back, causing pain and sometimes paralysis. The disease is caused when the jelly-like cushion between one or more vertebrae slips or ruptures, pressing on the spinal cord.

If your dog suddenly is unable or unwilling to jump up or go up stairs, back pain is likely. He may be reluctant to move around, have a hunched back, or refuse to eat, it may be very painful to squat to urinate or defecate. As with people, back pain can be very severe, leaving some dogs screaming in pain. They often cry when picked up or, with neck pain, if they try to turn or lower their head. They may drag the back feet or be suddenly paralyzed and be unable to get up or use the back legs. If the slipped disc is in the neck, all four legs may be affected.

Recommendation: As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent IVDD. Because this disease is so painful, call immediately if your dog shows any symptoms. Pain medications, safe for dogs, will be given ASAP and then, if surgery is not indicated, a program prescribed for rest and gradual return to exercise. Ramps or steps can be used from puppyhood on so that susceptible dogs don't stress their backs jumping on and off the furniture.

Lymphoma, also known as lymphosarcoma, is a common form of cancer in dogs. In this disease, the body forms abnormal lymphocytes, which are a type of white blood cell. Because white blood cells can be found throughout the body, this cancer can show up almost anywhere. It can present as swollen lymph nodes, an enlarged spleen or liver, intestinal disease, or as weight loss and a fever that doesn't get better with anti-inflammatory medications or antibiotics. Lymphoma is a very treatable form of cancer, with an 80% success rate in dogs receiving chemotherapy.

Recommendation: Annual physical exam and blood testing may allow an early diagnosis, as lymphoma is one of the few types of cancer that can sometimes be found with a complete blood count. Watch for swollen glands, panting or labored breathing and weight loss, and call us if any signs appear.

RISK	ACTION	DATE CARE IS NEEDED
Pulmonic Stenosis	Yearly/bi-annual physical exam	
Foreign Body	Prevent access to items that are potential problems	

Glaucoma	Annual pressure test	
Disc Disease	Weight management and aids to get up on to furniture	
Lymphoma	Annual blood testing	
Periodontal Disease	Dental diet, Brush teeth and have professionally examined and cleaned once a year to prevent irreversible damage from infection.	

Compassionate – as we tend to your pet’s needs.

Committed – to offering the best care for your pet.

Creative – in our use of new technology.

Connected – to our team, to our community and to the leaders in our industry.

Clean – Our hospital will be spotless and odor free.