

All You Need to Know About Chinese Crested Health Testing & Research

Health testing and research into potential health issues within this breed has become much easier with both the increase of laboratories offering tests and the growth of the internet and accessibility of information. In this day and age everyone is able to make informed choices based on readily available facts and of course your own test results.

You can find out all you need to know about all the health issues affecting our breed on the club website health page

But here we are going to focus on what responsible breeders and buyers need to know in order to ensure the future health and welfare of our treasured breed.

Eye Testing

There are 4 eye tests which are recommended for our breed and we would advise all breeders to undertake prior to breeding

- PRA-Prcd & PRA-Rcd3 – this is a one off test which can be done via a blood sample or DNA swab
- PLL – this is a one off test conducted via DNA Swab
- Gonioscopy – this is a physical exam for Glaucoma to be undertaken every 3 years
- BVA CERF - this is an annual physical test which looks at the health of the eye and for other eye issues for which there are currently no other DNA or Blood tests available to identify

As a buyer you should always ask for copies of these tests for both parents in order to make an informed decision about purchasing your new puppy. If the parents have not been tested for PLL or PRA as are 'Clear by default' (IE both sets of their parents have been tested clear) then you should ask for copies of the grandparents health test to ensure that the correct tests have been conducted and the sire and dam are actually Clear By Default as claimed. ALWAYS ASK TO VIEW PAPERWORK For all Health Tests! Any responsible breeder will have this readily at hand and be able to substantiate all claims made regarding the eye health of their breeding stock and puppies. Also note that it is recommended that 'clear by parentage' stock is tested every third generation so do bear this in mind also.

KCS or Dry Eye is another painful condition which can afflict our breed. Whilst it is hereditary it is hard to pinpoint where it will come out, so again research into pedigrees is always advisable and a simple Schirmer tear test can be undertaken in order to check tear production levels if there are any concerns.

Other Tests

Patellas can be a problem in this breed and in many countries patella testing is now compulsory. If you are buying abroad ensure you ask to see a copy of the parents patella tests if in a compulsory country. Elsewhere make the call based on your knowledge of the line you are purchasing from and any issues which have previously identified (IE Hopping or skipping on the move)

LCP – this does affect our breed but hip scoring to test for potential issues in breeding stock is not common. Again be sure to do your research to identify if there have been any issues in the pedigree but again it is a condition that does not come out in a predictable way.

Closed Ear Canal – again this is seen within our breed so do have this checked out and ask about family history.

Epilepsy – this is common in our breed and is in most lines somewhere. It can be mild or severe and often cases of mild epilepsy can go undetected by their owners. There are also a wide array of things which can cause seizures, so it is important to ensure you are clear on the cause as seizures are not always a result of hereditary epilepsy. The key thing is to research your pedigree in order to evaluate the risk. There is a lot of information online about epilepsy affected dogs and with a bit of research it is relatively easy to gain significant knowledge on where potential issues are likely to arise. There is currently research being undergone in the USA into Epilepsy in our breed so hopefully over time a test will be developed.

Heart Problems – The breed can be susceptible to Heart Murmurs, so always be sure to have a vet check to identify if a problem is present. There are various grades of heart murmurs which can worsen over time. It would appear that these are genetically inherited but as with Seizures there are other factors which can cause heart issues in dogs.

Auto Immune Diseases – these are many and varied but those most commonly seen in our breed seem to be Addison's, Cushing's, KCS or skin conditions. It's always best to ask breeders if there is any family history

Von Willebrand disease type II (VWDII) – this is an inherited bleeding disorder and is testable via blood sample or swab. The breed is currently showing to have a fair number of carrier and affected's in this disease but currently none are known to be symptomatic so it is a condition being looked into further to gain a better understanding of. In the meantime testing is being recommended but is not considered essential.

Degenerative myelopathy - is an inherited neurologic disorder affecting the spine and causing gradual paraplegia. This can be tested via blood sample or buccal swab and will again help ensure any genetic inheritance has not been passed on.

Canine multiple system degeneration – is another neurological disease affecting gait, balance and general movement. Again this can be tested via blood sample or buccal swab to ensure no genetic inheritance.

We do hope this guide is useful and of course you can visit the club website for more information. Our breed is generally a healthy breed but there are issues present and the more we are aware of them the more we can improve our breed.