



Pomeranian Health Issues

This is a list of the most common problems found in the breed. Remember, even the most conscientious breeder may have problems, however, since they are screening for genetic problems, you have a better chance of having a healthy puppy. The OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) and CHIC (Canine Health Information Center) are online searchable health databases for dogs. Many, but not all Pomeranian breeders are utilizing OFA and CHIC to register the health testing results of their dogs. The American Pomeranian Club recommends health testing for patellas, heart and CERF (eyes). Thyroid, Legg-Calve-Perthes Disease and hip dysplasia are optional health tests. www.offa.org <http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/chicinfo.html>

Luxating Patellas

Luxating patellas (knees that slip out of place) are the most common problem in the Pomeranian breed. The knees are graded according to the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals). Normal knees are, of course the most desirable, but Grades One and Two are common and not unusual in toy breeds. Grades Three and Four may require surgery, sometimes early on in the dog's life. Be sure to check the knees of any prospective puppy. One with higher grades at a young age will probably be a candidate for surgery.

Check the OFA database for results of the parents and ask to see a copy of the results from your breeder, when you are visiting your new puppy.

Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism (low thyroid) is very common in the Pomeranian breed. Health testing for a normal thyroid is an "optional" test recommended by the American Pomeranian Club. OFA has a registry for dogs who submit tests for thyroid.

Coat Loss Problems

There is a coat loss problem in Pomeranians called Alopecia X. It is also known as Black Skin Disease. Puppies may have profuse puppy coats with no guard hairs which does not shed. When the puppy coat sheds, the coat does not grow back. Another version of the same condition happens at a later age, with a normal appearing coat that slowly starts to thin, starting at the back of the thighs and buttocks and moving up the back. There are no health tests for this problem. Ask to see the parents or current photos of the parents of the dog you are buying.

Collapsing Trachea

Collapsing trachea is a problem found in many Poms. If your pom makes a honking noise or sounds like he is coughing up a hairball, the problem may be his trachea. It can be diagnosed with an Xray and usually medication is prescribed to reduce coughing. This can be a life-threatening problem, so do not ignore it.

Heart

Heart problems can range from very slight to life threatening. The American Pomeranian Club recommends OFA heart testing for Pomeranian and results should be visible online. Do keep mind that some heart issues occur later in life and are common in toy dogs.

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia can occur in young Pomeranians. It is more common in the very small or very active puppies. Be sure that your breeder gives you complete instructions on how to determine if your puppy is starting to develop hypoglycemia. It is a problem that the puppy outgrows as they mature. Adult hypoglycemia is a serious metabolic disorder. Dogs who have this should not be bred.

Seizures

Some Pomeranians have idiopathic epilepsy. Idiopathic means that we don't know what causes it. Liver problems, kidney problems, head trauma and other reasons may cause seizures. Idiopathic epilepsy typically occurs between 3-7 years of age and is thought to be inherited. Seizures can be very frightening to someone who has never seen one before and can manifest in many different ways. Look at the epilepsy website to gain a better understanding of the problem.

Eyes

A Veterinarian who is trained to do CERF testing can check eyes for genetic problems. OFA has a form and a database to check the parents of the puppy you are considering. To date, there have not been many eye problems found, but that may be because not many dogs have been tested. The American Pomeranian Club recommends CERF testing. Ask to see the CERF results of the parents of the puppy.

Hip Dysplasia/ Legg-Calve-Perthes Disease

Hip dysplasia and Legg-Calve-Perthes Disease occur in Pomeranians. Legg-Calve-Perthes Disease happens when the head of the femur (hind leg) bone does not grow properly. The OFA database will list test results. Hip dysplasia and Legg-Calve-Perthes Disease are listed as optional tests with the American Pomeranian Club.