

# Overview of Potential Health Risks and the Australian Shepherd

By Nannette Newbury

*Not all health issues can be covered in this overview, but identified and researched issues are included here.*

*The Australian Shepherd, as a canine, is susceptible to all known canine disorders and diseases.*

*There are numerous resources to research additional and potentially unusual health issues.*

*Many of the serious diseases that affect dogs are difficult to immediately eradicate in a conscientious breeding program for a variety of reasons.*

*Some of these might include, but are not limited to: 1) No known mode of inheritance; 2) can be inherited genetically, but can also be created environmentally; 3) some health issues can be induced by veterinary medicine standard operating procedures (vaccines, medications, antibiotics, treatments, early spay neuter) and 4) eliminating genetic issues in a breeding programs can take generations.*

Health	Maintenance	Issues that do not directly affect health/longevity	Tips to keep your dog healthy and living longer
<p>Cancers (genetic/environmental). Sample list of common, but not limited to these alone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hemangiosarcoma</li> <li>• Osteosarcoma</li> <li>• Lymphoma/ Lymphosarcoma</li> <li>• Mammary Carcinoma</li> <li>• Melanoma</li> <li>• Mast Cell</li> </ul> <p>Idiopathic Epilepsy (genetic or environmental?; no known mode of inheritance)</p> <p>Seizures (environmental)</p> <p>Multi-drug Resistance (MDR-1)</p>	<p>Parasites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ear mites</li> <li>• Ticks</li> <li>• Fleas</li> </ul> <p>Intestinal Parasites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round</li> <li>• Tape</li> <li>• Whip</li> <li>• Hook</li> <li>• Heart</li> </ul> <p>Viruses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parvo virus</li> <li>• Distemper</li> <li>• Rabies</li> <li>• Corona</li> <li>• Herpes</li> </ul>	<p>Missing teeth</p> <p>Mismarked color, dilute spots</p> <p>Eyes disorders</p> <p>Excessive white</p> <p>Deafness</p> <p>Cryptorchidism</p> <p>Sunburn</p> <p>Sound sensitivity</p> <p>Cruciate ligament ruptures</p> <p>Pink spots on the nose (especially with merles)</p> <p>Pelger Huet Anomaly (PHA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid annual vaccines (use blood titers two weeks after vaccinations to verify that immunity was created)</li> <li>• Avoid combination vaccines</li> <li>• Vaccinate only as needed (based on results of a titer; titer annually or every other year)</li> <li>• Avoid toxins (in and around your home)</li> <li>• Spay and neuter no earlier than TWO years of age!</li> <li>• Do not vaccinate your dog when it is having an immune issue</li> <li>• Use Thimerosal-free rabies vaccine</li> <li>• Take an active role in your dog's vet care; ask questions, ask for a second opinion; ask your breeder</li> <li>• Feed a healthy diet (we recommend a raw diet)</li> <li>• Avoid chemically based flea and tick remedie</li> </ul>

Health	Maintenance	Issues that do not directly affect health/longevity	Tips to keep your dog healthy and living longer
<p>Immune System (genetic/environmental)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thyroid issues</li> <li>• Hypothyroidism</li> <li>• Demodectic mange</li> <li>• Allergies</li> <li>• Autoimmune disease</li> <li>• Lupus</li> <li>• Immune Mediated Hemolytic Anemia (associated cause heartworm medications)</li> </ul> <p>Eyes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cataracts (genetic/environmental)</li> <li>• Iris Coloboma</li> <li>• PRA Progressive Retinal Atrophy</li> <li>• CEA Collie Eye Anomaly</li> <li>• Distichiasis (mode of inheritance unknown)</li> </ul> <p>Hip/Elbow Dysplasia (genetic/environmental)</p> <p>Cobalamin (B12) Malabsorption</p> <p>Inflammatory Central Nervous System (CNS) disorder</p> <p>Meningoencephalomyelitis</p> <p>Hypomyelinogenesis</p>	<p>Infections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helicobacter</li> <li>• Pyometra</li> <li>• Eclampsia</li> <li>• Influenza</li> <li>• Hepatitis</li> <li>• Brucellosis</li> <li>• Leptospirosis</li> <li>• Lyme disease</li> <li>• Ehrilichiosis</li> <li>• Rocky Mountain spotted fever</li> <li>• Clostridium</li> <li>• Bordatella</li> </ul> <p>Fungal Infections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blastomycosis</li> <li>• Histoplasmosis</li> <li>• Coccidiomycosis</li> <li>• Cryptococcosis</li> <li>• Ringworm</li> <li>• Sporotrichosis</li> <li>• Aspergilliosis</li> <li>• Ptyhiosis</li> <li>• Mucormycosis</li> </ul> <p>Protozoal Diseases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giardiasis</li> <li>• Coccidiosis</li> <li>• Leishmaniasis</li> <li>• Babesiosis</li> <li>• Neosporosis</li> <li>• Protothecosis</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid monthly heartworm medications if your climate and area allows (give bi-annual heartworm tests and treat as needed based on the life cycle of the heartworm)</li> <li>• After every vaccine, be diligent in looking for any subtle adverse reactions (these can appear as late as two weeks after vaccination).</li> </ul> <p>Medications to consider avoiding (we suspect that these might be having adverse effects on the long-term health of our dogs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IVERMECTIN</li> <li>• All drugs on the MDR-1 website (drugs on list changes) : (<a href="http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/dept-s-vcpl/drugs.aspx">http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/dept-s-vcpl/drugs.aspx</a>)</li> <li>• Metronidazole</li> <li>• Antibiotics (use sparingly; if other choices are available and effective, avoid the antibiotic).</li> <li>• Corona Virus vaccine</li> <li>• Leptospirosis vaccine</li> <li>• Bordatella vaccine</li> <li>• Combination vaccines (more than one disease combined in one shot)</li> </ul>