

Health Defects and Testing in the Boxer Breed page 1

As a responsible breeder I am dedicated to doing all that I can to ensure that my Boxers have had the health testing they need in order to produce healthy puppies and live long, happy lives. Below is a list of the common Boxer genetic diseases and the tests that can be performed to determine genetic fitness for breeding. On my Males/Females page you can see what testing has been done for each of my Boxers and the results of those tests. If you have any questions or want more detailed information regarding health testing for Boxers I would recommend visiting the website of the American Boxer Club at the following address:
<http://www.americanboxerclub.org/health-screening.html>

Defect: Aortic Stenosis/Sub-Aortic Stenosis (AS/SAS)

Is a heart defect in that there is narrowing of the aorta which causes less blood flow. This can result in fainting and sudden death.

Test: Doppler Echocardiogram

Is an ultrasound of the heart that detects abnormal flow velocities.

Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

http://americanboxerclub.org/boxer_cardiomyopathy.html

Defect: Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy (ARVC) AKA Boxer Cardiomyopathy

Is an electrical conduction disorder that causes the heart to beat erratically sometimes. If this happens often, collapse or sudden death can result.

Test: Holter Monitor

Is a 24-Hour EKG that is used to test for PVCs that should be done yearly.

Test: DNA Test

It can tell which dogs have the gene for ARVC; one-time DNA cheek swab. The test clearly defines dogs that are Negative (2 copies of Normal gene), those that are Positive Heterozygous (1 copy of mutated gene, 1 copy of normal gene), and those that are Positive Homozygous (2 copies of mutated gene). Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/deptsvcgl/boxer/>

Defect: Bloat or Gastric Dilation-Volvus (GDV)

Is where the stomach becomes distended with air, twists on itself, and cuts off the blood supply to the heart. This can cause sudden drop in blood pressure and death.

Test: X-rays of stomach and surgery to correct torsion

To help prevent bloat, slow the dog's speed of eating and restrict its activities directly after eating a meal.

Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

<http://www.boxerrescue.com/bloat.htm>

Defect: Cancer

Mast cell, lymphoma, and other cancers are prevalent in Boxers.

Test: No test available

Constantly examine your dog for any lumps or bumps and get regular check-ups.

Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

<http://iupucbio2.iupui.edu/bml/cancinfo.html>

Defect: Corneal Dystrophy AKA Boxer Ulcer

Is an ulcer that results when one or more layers of the cornea are affected. This can be recurring or become a chronic issue in some dogs.

Test: No test available

The only way you know your dog has this is if they are afflicted with the ulcers.

Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

<http://www.hopecenter.com/PetLibrary/IndolentCornealUlcer/tabid/165/Default.aspx>

Defect: Degenerative Myelopathy (DM)

Is a slow progressive wasting disease of the hindquarters that affects the central nervous system, which consists of the brain and spinal cord. DM has 4 progressive stages:

1. Toe dragging or knuckling over;
2. Crossing of the back legs and mild loss of side-to-side hip control;
3. Moderate to severe loss of side-to-side hip control;
4. Total hind end paralysis.

Test: DNA test

It clearly identifies dogs that are Normal N/N (have 2 normal copies of the gene), those who are Carriers A/N Heterozygous (have 1 normal copy of the gene and 1 mutated copy of the gene), and those who are At Risk A/A Homozygous (have 2 copies of the gene).

Research has shown that all dogs that were confirmed DM had A/A DNA test results; however not all dogs testing as A/A have shown clinical signs of DM.

Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

www.caninegeneticdiseases.net/DM/maindm.htm

Defect: Hip Dysplasia

Is a malformation of the hip joint which can lead to osteoarthritis. The dog suffers pain with osteoarthritis and can become weak and even lame.

Test: OFA Hips

Is an X-ray of the pelvic joint.

Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

<http://www.offa.org/hipinfo.html>

Defect: Hypothyroidism

Is an inactive thyroid gland. It can cause hair loss, obesity, lethargy, and skin problems. Quality of life is reduced due to the symptoms it causes.

Test: OFA Thyroid

Is a blood test to detect autoimmune thyroiditis. Only a few places in the country perform this full panel test.

Additional information about this disease can be found on the following website:

<http://americanboxerclub.org/purina3.html>