

# Canine Hip Dysplasia

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Hip Dysplasia in dogs is a disease that is characterised by instability of the hip joint (laxity), pain and eventually degenerative joint disease. It is considered to be inherited as a polygenic character (that is many genes are involved) and may be modified by many nongenetic factors. These non genetic factors are diet, rate of growth, body weight and exercise. In one report, rapid weight gain in the first 60 days of life and the ultimate above average weight of the dogs was associated with a higher level of hip dysplasia than the control group.

## **The Important Facts About Hip Dysplasia**

Hip dysplasia occurs in all breeds of dogs, without radiographic proof, no breeder can state that his or her dogs are free of hip dysplasia. Considering the total number and popularity of Border Collies in Australia, the numbers that have been radiographed and results published are appallingly low.

Selection pressure on the breed has changed. As a working breed, the Border Collie was selected for its working instinct and ability to work all day. This meant that soundness was one of the two most important criteria selected for and as a consequence good hips. Now our selection criteria includes coat, breed standard conformation, temperament, soundness, CL status and collie eye. Show and pet soundness does not equate with working soundness. We can not assume good hips because the dog appears sound in the ring or backyard.

Because of modern transport, chilled and frozen semen, a single stud dog can have a profound influence on the breed. It is possible for a fault to become established in a breed very quickly. (You only have to look at the Bull Terrier breed and the devastation caused by polycystic kidneys to appreciate how significant this risk is)

Current results in the Border Collie indicate that the incidence and severity of hip dysplasia is low, however severe cases have been seen.

**As responsible breeders, for both the good of the breed and to meet our legal obligations of producing sound pups for sale, it is imperative that breeding stock be radiographed.**

The current method of scoring is based on an extended view of the hips. The AVA has tried to address the discrepancies that occur between readers and have instigated a review panel. A newer method, the Pen Hip Score, measures the laxity of the hip. Currently the radiographs for the Penn Hip System can only be done by veterinarians trained and licensed by the American Company that devised this system. In addition the scoring is done in America. Time and peer review will probably validate this as a more accurate method of assessing dogs for hip dysplasia.

Undoubtedly there is a risk associated with a general anaesthetic, which is required for both the AVA and Penn Hip System. This is true in both human and veterinary medicine. No veterinarian can give you a 100% safety guarantee. We all love our dogs and would hate anything to go wrong. However young dogs with severe hip dysplasia being euthanased for a disease that we can help to prevent is more devastating.