

The importance of health when buying a Coton de Tulear

This guidance will provide you with information regarding the importance of health and what to look for from a breeder. We will consider:

1. Background to DNA health testing;
2. Why should breeders do this?
3. Recommended tests;
4. Additional tests; and
5. Access to further information.

Background to DNA health testing

Over the last few years, DNA health testing has become available for lots of breeds and is a vital tool for breeders in order to continue to breed healthy dogs.

DNA health testing is very different from a breeder taking their dogs to a vet for annual vaccinations and a health check exam.

A vaccination card or a proof of blood tests from their vet is NOT proof the dogs have been DNA health tested. This is also not proof the dogs cannot pass certain genetic health conditions on to their puppies.

DNA health tests are done using saliva or blood and the sample is then sent away to a laboratory for genetic analysis.

The breeder either receives the results via post or by signing into an online account available through the lab, where the DNA health results are available for the breeder to print individual health certificates.

Why should breeders do this?

Breeders should test their breeding dogs for conditions that may affect the parents and offspring. Some conditions dogs can live with, others will hinder the dog's quality of life and in worst-case scenarios, some can shorten the dog's life expectancy. This is why DNA health testing is so important to both breeders and owners.

If a breeder cannot produce copies of certificates of the disorders they have tested for, there is a chance their dogs have not been tested. Be careful.



Recommended tests

The Coton de Tulear Club recommends that breeders should perform DNA health tests for the following health disorders and documentation should be provided to puppy buyers:

1. Canine Multi-Focal Retinopathy (CMR2) – raised lesions on the retina of the eye.
2. Hyperuricosuria (HUU) – hard stones form in the bladder, can cause urinary and bladder problems.
3. Von Willebrand Disease Type 1 (VWD Type 1) – a bleeding disorder.
4. Degenerative Myelopathy (DM) – a progressive neurological disorder that affects the spinal cord.
5. Primary Hyperoxaluria (PHPT) – a deficiency of a liver enzyme needed to break down calcium oxalate crystals.
6. Malignant Hyperthermia (MH) – causes extreme muscle contractions, increased metabolism, rapid heartbeat and elevated temperature.
7. Chondrodystrophy (CDDY/IVDD) (effects the spinal region) and Chondrodysplasia (CDPA) types of dwarfism.

It is very important that these tests are completed and the results seen before even considering buying a Coton de Tulear puppy.

Please only buy from a breeder who has done the tests ABOVE and who is willing to discuss and explain the test results with you. This will help assist you find the healthiest puppy possible to the breeder's knowledge at the time.

More information on specific disorders can be accessed in the members' area of the Club website.

Additional tests

Other tests the breeders may have done are:

1. Neonatal Ataxia (NA) – damage to the cerebellum, which controls coordination and movement in newborn puppies.
2. Primary Lens Luxation (PLL) – dislocation of the lens of the eye.
3. Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA-PRCD) – where cells in the retina of the eye degenerate and die.



Access to further information

For a much more in-depth look at health conditions including IVDD, ALD, slipping patellar, skin conditions, staining, mange, in fact all things Coton de Tulear, please join the Coton de Tulear Club. The members' area of the website has full access to lots of interesting topics and much more about the Coton de Tulear's general health, advice and access to a members' Facebook page.

Members can even find out the answer to why your Coton may have those dreaded tear stains and others don't.

You need to join the Coton de Tulear Club first to access it.

