

TETHERED TIPS

Questions & Veterinary Tests

FOR RESPONSIBLE BREEDING

A veterinary conversation guide for breeders

Veterinarians play a vital role in every stage of the breeding process. Use this guide to start conversations with your veterinary team and help make informed, responsible decisions for the health and well-being of your dogs and future generations.



Not every test is appropriate for every dog or breed. Work with your veterinarian to determine what is best.



BEFORE BREEDING: QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ☐ Is this dog healthy and in good condition?
- ☐ Are there concerns that increase risk?
- ☐ Is age, weight & body condition appropriate?
- ☐ Are vaccines current and well-timed?
- ☐ Is parasite prevention appropriate?
- ☐ Are medications/supplements safe?
- ☐ Any previous illnesses, injuries, or reproductive concerns?
- ☐ What breed-specific health testing is recommended?
- ☐ Should any testing be repeated?
- ☐ Should we consult a specialist?
- ☐ Are there concerns in the pedigree or previous offspring?



Knowledge today leads to better decisions tomorrow.



HEALTH TESTING & SCREENING

- ☐ Hip evaluation (OFA or PennHIP)
- ☐ Elbow evaluation
- ☐ Cardiac examination
- ☐ Eye examination by ophthalmologist
- ☐ Patella evaluation
- ☐ Thyroid testing
- ☐ Hearing testing (BAER when appropriate)
- ☐ Breed-specific DNA testing
- ☐ Other breed-specific screening
- ☐ Follow-up or specialist evaluation for any abnormal findings



A DNA panel is not a complete health-testing program.



GENETIC TESTING: QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ☐ Which inherited conditions are relevant to this breed?
- ☐ What do results (Clear, Carrier, At Risk, Affected) mean?
- ☐ Does the condition have a known mode of inheritance?
- ☐ Should the potential mate's results be considered?
- ☐ Does this affect the dog's health?
- ☐ Would genetic counseling help?
- ☐ Are there limitations to the test?
- ☐ Can the results be independently verified?



A carrier result does not automatically mean a dog is unhealthy or should never be bred.



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- ☐ General reproductive examination
- ☐ Reproductive history review
- ☐ Brucellosis testing
- ☐ Semen evaluation (male)
- ☐ Reproductive tract evaluation
- ☐ Hormone testing when appropriate
- ☐ Breeding timing guidance
- ☐ Fertility evaluation if concerns exist
- ☐ Natural breeding vs. assistance
- ☐ Referral to a theriogenologist when needed



Early reproductive evaluation can help identify concerns and support better outcomes.



BEFORE BREEDING TAKES PLACE

- ☐ Are both dogs appropriate candidates?
- ☐ Have health-testing results been reviewed?
- ☐ Are there risks combining these two dogs?
- ☐ Is additional testing needed?
- ☐ What if breeding doesn't result in pregnancy?
- ☐ What signs after breeding require attention?
- ☐ Who do we contact for reproductive services?



Ask questions, gather information, and make thoughtful decisions—together.



DURING PREGNANCY

- ☐ When & how should pregnancy be confirmed?
- ☐ How should nutrition and weight change?
- ☐ Which meds/supplements are safe?
- ☐ Which parasite preventives are appropriate?
- ☐ What exercise is appropriate?
- ☐ What symptoms require veterinary attention?
- ☐ Should imaging be done later in pregnancy?
- ☐ What could increase risk of difficult delivery?



Regular communication with your vet helps support a healthy pregnancy.



PREPARING FOR WHELPING

- ☐ What does normal labor look like?
- ☐ When is veterinary help needed?
- ☐ When might a C-section be necessary?
- ☐ How do we contact our vet after hours?
- ☐ Where is the nearest emergency facility?
- ☐ Where is reproductive/surgical care available?
- ☐ How will we get there if needed?
- ☐ Which supplies does our vet recommend?



Have an emergency plan in place before you need it.



AFTER WHELPING: THE DAM

Monitor for changes in:

- ☐ Appetite & drinking
- ☐ Temperature/illness
- ☐ Discharge
- ☐ Mammary glands
- ☐ Milk production
- ☐ Pain or discomfort
- ☐ Behavior
- ☐ Interest in puppies
- ☐ Weakness, tremors, or other unusual signs



When something doesn't seem right, contact your veterinarian.



NEWBORN & PUPPY CARE

- ☐ Newborn assessment when appropriate
- ☐ Monitor weight and growth
- ☐ Evaluate puppies not nursing or gaining
- ☐ Check for congenital abnormalities
- ☐ Parasite control planning
- ☐ Wellness exams
- ☐ Vaccination planning
- ☐ Nutrition guidance
- ☐ Identify developmental concerns
- ☐ Individual health records for each puppy



Healthy puppies today build healthier generations tomorrow.



QUESTIONS ABOUT PUPPIES

- ☐ What do healthy puppies look like?
- ☐ How often should puppies be weighed?
- ☐ What weight gain should we expect?
- ☐ What signs mean a puppy needs help?
- ☐ When is the first vet visit?
- ☐ What vaccination schedule is best?
- ☐ What parasite prevention schedule?
- ☐ When to evaluate concerns?
- ☐ What vet information goes home with each family?



Partner with your vet to give puppies the best start in life.



KEEP GOOD RECORDS

Maintain organized records for:

- ☐ Health-testing results
- ☐ Genetic-testing results
- ☐ Vet examinations
- ☐ Reproductive testing
- ☐ Breeding dates & timing
- ☐ Pregnancy records
- ☐ Whelping information
- ☐ Birth weights
- ☐ Puppy growth
- ☐ Medications & treatments
- ☐ Vaccinations
- ☐ Parasite prevention
- ☐ Health concerns
- ☐ Specialist reports
- ☐ Outcomes from litters



Good records help you and your vet make better decisions in the future.



ONE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION

"Is there anything we know about this dog—or this pairing—that should make us reconsider?"

- ☐ Testing isn't about collecting certificates or making every dog "pass."
- ☐ Veterinary care isn't about getting approval for a plan already decided.

Both are tools for gathering information and making thoughtful, responsible decisions.



TETHERED TIP

Your veterinarian and your knowledge work best together.

- ☐ Build a team.
- ☐ Share information.
- ☐ Ask questions.
- ☐ Use specialists when needed.
- ☐ Verify results.
- ☐ Keep records.
- ☐ Be willing to change the plan when the health and welfare of the dogs call for it.



Different roles. One goal:
Healthier dogs and healthier generations.

