



Australian Shepherd Health & Genetics Institute, Inc



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Autoimmune Diseases

A number of autoimmune diseases have been reported in Australian Shepherds and this class of diseases is very common in the breed. These diseases are genetically predisposed, meaning that to become ill the dog must have the necessary genes though not every dog with the genes will get sick. It is common to encounter different forms of AI disease in a single affected family, so for breeding purposes they should be treated as a single health issue.

Affected dogs should not be bred. Healthy dogs which produce multiple affected offspring, particularly with different mates, should be withdrawn from breeding. Breeders should do pedigree research to determine how much AI disease risk their breeding dogs have and where risk is high make mating choices which will reduce risk in the puppies.

The most common AI diseases in Aussies are in order of frequency: Autoimmune thyroiditis (hypothyroidism), Inflammatory Bowel Disease, lupus, and pemphigus. Less frequently encountered diseases include, Addison's Disease, autoimmune testicular atrophy, degenerative myelopathy, dermatomyositis, exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, glomerulonephritis, idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura, immune mediated hemolytic anemia, Legg-Calvé-Perthes, myasthenia gravis, sterile pyogranuloma/granuloma syndrome, uveodermatologic syndrome, and vitiligo.