

Renal Dysplasia

NB – This may not be a disease that affects German Shepherd Dogs but it is worth a read so you are aware of such things in Dogs.

Several full litters have died and the majority of other litters have died, before they have reached 6 months of age. Most die when with their new owners, which not only brings considerable heartache and distress for the family, but also creates potentially difficult and costly consequences for the breeder especially if there is existed some “prior knowledge or suspicion” of the potential problem by the breeder or the stud dog owner.

If this is the case with any breeder or stud dog owner I would seriously recommend that they have any resultant puppies carefully checked out.

Breeders should test their puppies as early as eight weeks (ultrasound and urine tests)

The information I require is in regard to effected GSD litters, size of litter, number of fatalities, age of fatality or euthanasia, copy of the litters pedigree

There are many assumptions circulating and it is important that we try to isolate this problem and eradicate it from our breed here in the UK. This may be possible at this stage and level of incidence. However any delay will surely reduce this opportunity substantially. Then we will all be faced with a very worrying future, especially every time we breed a litter.

Renal Dysplasia

Renal dysplasia (RD) belongs to the group of common familial kidney disorders in cats and dogs that includes renal amyloidosis, renal dysplasia, polycystic kidneys, basement membrane disorders, and tubular dysfunction (Fanconi's syndrome). **Renal Dysplasia is a genetic disease that affects the kidneys.** The kidneys are malformed (small and pale) and are unable to function properly. The functional kidney units (nephrons) do not mature and remain at their infantile stage until they fail. This loss of nephrons is "silent" because it can go on for months or years without causing any symptoms. Only when two-thirds of nephrons have been destroyed are there the beginning of the clinical signs.

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SIGNS

The early stage, called compensated renal insufficiency is marked by excessive thirst and increased urination. When three-quarters of nephrons are gone, affected dogs are in renal failure. The kidneys can no longer filter toxins from the blood and the affected dogs are physically ill from the poison.

The most severely affected dogs have problems by eight weeks of age. They die shortly thereafter. Mildly affected individuals may make it to six months of age before having problems. The most devastating cases to the breed are those that are only minimally affected and live long enough to contribute their defective genes to future generations. Blood test such as urea (blood urea nitrogen) and creatinine will only detect kidney problems when 75% or more of the kidney capacity is lost. The definitive diagnosis of renal dysplasia requires biopsy.

TREATMENT

Although some medications can relieve the pain and suffering of the dog, **there is no cure for kidney failure.** Dialysis can be done, but it is expensive and typically buys only a small amount of time. A low-protein diet that is rich in specific amino acids and low in phosphates is the best nutritional approach for mildly affected individuals.

Breeders should test their puppies as early as eight weeks (ultrasound and urine tests). A renal biopsy may be more accurate, but it is less safe.