

Addison's Disease

Committee Name:

Addison's Disease	
Chair:	Karen Miller
Members:	Dr. Karen Kelly, Jane Harding

Health Condition:

Addison's disease is caused when the adrenal glands deteriorate. These small hormone producing glands are located above each kidney and are important for controlling the metabolism of sugar and maintaining the salt and water balances in the body.

As the adrenal glands cease to produce vital hormones, physical and behavioral symptoms develop, sometimes in an inconsistent manner, so an owner might observe one or any combination of signs:

Depression, lethargy or weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, and/or a lack of interest in food, which is always a telltale sign that something is wrong in a Portuguese Water Dog.

Why the PWDCA is addressing this:

Addison's is an inherited disease in Portuguese Water Dogs and should be ruled out as early as possible when a dog is ill. Diagnosis can be extremely difficult unless a veterinarian is aware of the tendency to Addison's in the breed. The good news is that once diagnosed, most Portuguese Water Dogs stabilized on medication, can live nearly normal lives and live as long as other dogs.

NEW - University of California Cheek Swab Request - Click here to request the kit and participate in this research product. (**Please Note: This kit is for participation in a research study only - it is not a test to verify if your dog does or does not have this disease. All submissions are confidential and results for individual dogs will not be made available.**)

What the PWDCA is doing:

The PWDCA Addison's Committee has provided information and support to owners of affected dogs and has maintained data on Addisonian Portuguese Water Dogs since

1984.

Through the Georgie Project, it has been determined that Addison's disease is immune mediated based on autopsy of a Portuguese Water Dog (see article, **The Three Awful A's**, where immune mediated polyglandular syndrome is described)

Now a new study will be getting underway, supported by PWDCA and the CHF, at Michigan State University. This research is to develop and evaluate laboratory techniques for a new diagnostic tool that will utilize anti-adrenal autoantibodies that can be identified in blood serum. This test, unlike the ACTH, would predict *preclinical* Addison's disease. A technique of this nature could assist in breeding programs and provide a strong basis for future molecular genetic research of Addison's disease. More about this study will be reported as data becomes available.

Current Status

We do not yet have a mode of inheritance for Addison's disease in Portuguese Water Dogs. Until we do, it will be extremely difficult to predict which dogs will become affected or which dogs will produce Addison's disease. But the first step to success is to report all Addisonian dogs. See the ***Information Sheet for Addison's Disease*** (below) which should be sent to the PWDCA Addison's Committee and the PWDCA Health Registry.

Other Important References – articles, books, websites

Articles: The Three Awful A's

Web sites: The Georgie Project - www.georgieproject.com

Info Sheet: Information Sheet for Addison's Disease (for owners of Addisonian dogs)

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