



THE WORKING CLUMBER SPANIEL SOCIETY

www.workingclumber.co.uk

Factsheet

EXERCISE INDUCED COLLAPSE (EIC)

GET THE FACTS



Clumber Spaniels are a rare and vulnerable breed with only around 200 puppies born each year.

Breeding strategies need to be thoughtful and well informed. There is a responsibility to act on facts rather than personal opinion.

The Working Clumber Spaniel Society is grateful for the ongoing guidance and support from both the Kennel Club and The Animal Health Trust who study and understand the breeding strategies appropriate to the breed and its small gene pool.

WHAT IS EIC?

EIC was first identified as a genetically inherited condition for Clumber spaniels in 2015. A DNA test is available from Laboklin (<http://www.laboklin.co.uk>) and they offer a 10% discount for WCSS and CSC members - contact the Society for a discount form before submitting your test.

Symptoms are usually triggered by extreme excitement (rather than exercise) and start with wobbliness and lack of co-ordination. If the dog is left in a situation which has caused excitement it will begin to drag its back legs. There are no signs of pain or discomfort to the dog. Given a short period of rest the muscle strength restores and the dog returns to normal. Although not life threatening in itself the loss of control could obviously cause an accident of some kind if, for example, it is swimming.

We must test breeding stock for EIC before use. Untested dogs used in breeding are the main threat from this condition. There is no excuse for failure to test. Once tested, breeders will be able to plan litters which do not produce affected dogs and do not harm genetic diversity by unnecessary elimination of vital breeding stock.

Carriers of EIC will never experience symptoms and we must continue to use them in breeding.

The existence of a simple DNA test means there is no reason to breed another affected dog.



WHAT DOES EIC MEAN FOR PUPPY BUYERS AND BREEDERS?

EIC status in a specific dog is classed as **CLEAR**, **CARRIER** or **AFFECTED**. There is no reason to produce any more affected dogs provided that both parents are tested so we know their EIC status. We advise testing all breeding stock, including those which might be assumed hereditary clear.

Only affected dogs can ever display symptoms, around 50% of known affected dogs have actually shown symptoms and these number in single figures.

EIC is recessively inherited which means that the implications for breeding can be easily understood;

Where the mating is Clear x Clear the resulting litter will be Clear of the condition.

Clear x Carrier matings can produce either Clear or Carrier dogs. The litter must be tested, preferably by the breeder. No pup from this mating will be Affected.

Affected x Clear will produce all Carrier dogs. No pup will be Affected.

Carrier x Carrier may produce Clear, Carriers or Affected dogs and should not be done. We don't want to risk producing another Affected dog. Test any accidental matings.

Affected x Affected will produce more affected dogs for certain and should not be done.

WHY DON'T WE ELIMINATE EIC BY BREEDING ONLY WITH CLEAR DOGS?

Clear x Clear matings are obviously an attractive strategy for individual breeders BUT we are advised by Kennel Club and Animal Health Trust canine geneticists that it must not be the **ONLY** strategy. To exhort, as some do, **only** Clear x Clear matings is simplistic and damaging to the breed which already has a dangerously low breeding population.

Geneticists tell us that carriers have an important part to play in breeding, and thus genetic diversity, for at least 3 generations (12 years) and possibly longer. To throw away ALL of the valuable genes in our EIC carrier dogs is genetic vandalism which must not be tolerated. To do so risks losing the breed altogether.

Responsible breeding rejects quick fixes opined by a tiny minority who do not understand the currently vital role of Carriers in the breeding programme. Geneticists strongly advise **gradual** breeding away from genetic conditions where a DNA test exists. This is essential to preserve vital genetic diversity.

Thankfully the geneticists' advice to avoid panic and knee jerk reaction to EIC has been absorbed by the Clumber community and the outlook for sensible management of EIC in a small population is bright.