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# Dog Breeds: What you need to know about Australian Shepherds

🕒 November 10, 2020  Committees, Partner News, Scientific

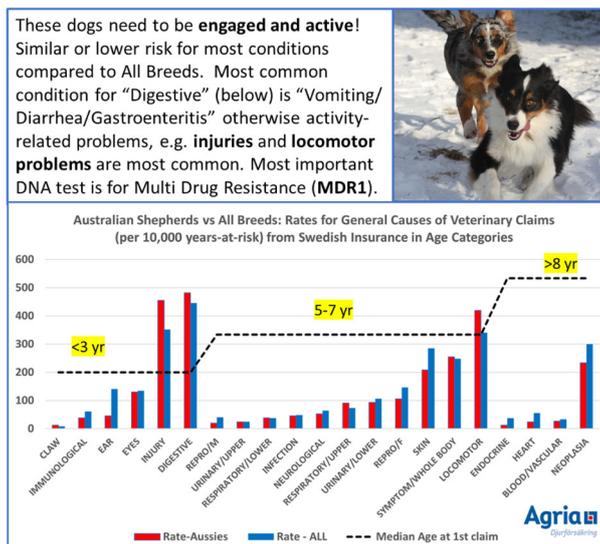


Staying up to date with common, let alone rare, health risks in susceptible dog breeds can be difficult. In this regular feature, our Educational Partner, [International Partnership for Dogs \(IPFD\)](#) signposts resources on a particular breed and highlights breed-specific diseases.

## Meet the Australian Shepherds – Not, in fact, Australian!

'Aussies' were developed in the USA and first registered in 1957. Many people are attracted by their beauty but Aussies are renowned for their herding ability and athletic prowess at activities such as flyball. These active, intelligent dogs need to exercise both mind and body. Populations are stable in many countries, but the breed is seeing an increase in popularity in some countries, e.g. France, USA. Basically, Aussies are a healthy breed with a typical lifespan of more than 10 years. Swedish data show that their overall claims for life and veterinary care insurance are below the average for All Breeds (combined). Especially in regions where the focus is on maintaining the natural working abilities, the most common health issues are injury and locomotor problems.





This issue of the WSAVA Bulletin is focused on the work of its Hereditary Disease Committee which helps veterinarians and breed clubs to focus on genetic issues. For Aussies, breeding strategies globally recommend the use of typical health testing (eg for hips, elbows, and eyes), as well as pre-breeding genetic testing for several conditions. Most of these conditions, however, are not a common or serious problem in the breed.



One genetic test that is particularly important for both individual dogs and pre-breeding decisions is MDR-1 Multidrug Resistance, which is well-researched for this breed. Carrying even one copy of the mutation of the gene can make a dog sensitive to certain medications, sometimes to the point of serious neurological illness or death. For a full list of genetic tests, more statistics, and further links to research check out the [Get a GRIHP! on Australian Shepherds article](#).

*The International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD) is a non-profit working for dog health, well-being, and welfare. This article has been prepared by its CEO, Dr Brenda Bonnett, DVM PhD*

**IPFD**   
**DogWellNet**

#### More resources to help you:

- [IPFD's Harmonization of Genetic Testing for Dogs – Search on Breed, Test/Phone or Genetic Test Providers](#)

 Bentjen, SA., Gay, JM., Cantor, GH.: Ivermectin sensitivity in collies is associated on mutation of the *mdr1* gene. *Pharmacogenetics* 11:727-33, 2001. Pubmed 1692082.

- Mealey KL. (2016) How should I treat dogs and cats with MDR1 mutations? *Therapeutics*

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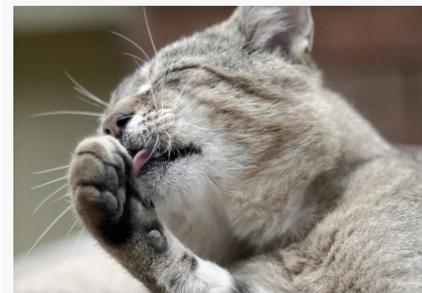
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