#

# Hip Dysplasia

What do we do to try to reduce Hip Dysplasia in our golden retriever pups? We believe there are five key elements to this puzzle and try to reduce the likelihood of dysplasia by attacking it on all five fronts.

Hip dysplasia is a genetic disease. Unfortunately, it is not carried on only one gene but multiple genes come together to produce the disease in any one animal. Therefore, there is no gene test that will tell us whether an adult is carrying the genes for the disease. Sometimes generations of goldens are fine and then through an unfortunate combinations of genes from the mother and father of the pup, an affected pup is produced.

That said, there are 2 ways we try to ‘stack the odds’ on the genetic end.

1. All our adult dogs are X-rayed to see what their hips look like. We only breed dogs that receive a grade of fair, good or excellent from the OFA. (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals.) We also use the PENNHIP registry and breed animals rated 50th percentile or higher. (meaning hips are tighter than 50% of all golden retrievers.)
2. We get all available information about as many generations of animals in our dogs’ pedigrees as we

can. We interview breeders, use the K-9 database and keep track of information on our pups.

3) Nutrition

Recent research has shown that nutrition has a HUGE role in the joint health of pups. When pups grow too rapidly, they are inclined to develop hip dysplasia at much higher rates.

The Golden Retriever Club of America’s 1998 survey of owners found:

*“The relationship between being overweight as a puppy or an adult and subsequently*

*developing hip dysplasia is also highly significant. Once again, being overweight as a puppy is a stronger predictor of developing hip dysplasia than is being overweight as an adult. For example, of the dogs that were overweight as a puppy, 31% subsequently developed hip dysplasia versus only 17% for those that were average weight as puppies. The comparable percentages for adults that were either overweight or average weight, as adults were 25 and 17%, respectively.”*

* We watch our pups and limit their feed to encourage them to grow at a slow rate. We do not believe in fat and roly-poly pups.
* Watch out for puppy chows that force pups to grow fast.
* Do not overfeed. You want slow, steady growth over an extended period of time.
* WE ASK THAT ALL PUPS BE SWITCHED TO ADULT FOOD AT 4 MONTHS OF AGE if using a brand other than Life’s Abundance.
1. Avoid injury to the hips by avoiding all activities that stress the joints until the pup is AT LEAST a year. These activities include jumping unto the tailgate of a vehicle, climbing full flights of stairs, jumping for Frisbees or tennis balls, taking long walks on leashes on pavement or similar actions.
2. Spay or neuter pups later than it is traditionally done. Instead of 6 months, studies are showing that neutering after a year old (or not at all) helps to reduce the incidence of hip dysplasia in Golden Retrievers. Some studies show that the sex hormones are very important for balanced growth of the bones and joints.