

Diseases and Disorders Affecting Akitas

Here is a list of medical/health problems that been diagnosed in Akita at some time. This does not mean all Akitas are or will be affected by one or any of these problems; some may never have any problems, others may have one or several of these problems. Knowing about them is important and can lead to early diagnosis with immediate treatment.

1. Lymphocytic Hypothyroidism (auto-immune related insufficient production of thyroid hormone)
2. Von Wildebrant's Disease (heredity bleeding disorder similar to hemophilia)
3. Progressive Retinal Atrophy (degeneration of the retina)
4. Immune-mediated skin diseases with a heritable factor
 - a) Pemphigus Foliaceus (causes pustules, crusting on face, leads to depigmentation)
 - b) Pemphigus Vulgaris (rarer, milder form)
 - c) Sebaceous Adenitis (oil glands in skin quit functioning leading to loss of undercoat, thickened skin and a musty rancid odor)
 - d) Atopic Dermatitis (skin reaction to allergies)
5. Polyarthritis (painful joints: can be caused by reactions to immunization, lyme disease, etc) and FUO (fever of unknown origin caused by same)
6. Vitiligo alone or Uveodermatological syndrome (VKH)- (loss of pigment, ulcers and crusting in mucus membranes (nose, eyes, anus, genitals) can be accompanied by painful blindness)
7. Popping Hocks (laxity of the hock joint)
8. Thrombocytopenia (low blood platelet count) often seen with #9
9. Autoimmune Hemolytic Anemia (immune system attacks and destroys red blood cells)
10. Microthalmia (abnormally small eyes) Multiple Colobomas Cupping or bulging of eyeball near optic nerve (from an inherited recessive gene)
11. Immune-mediated endocrine diseases with a heritable factor
 - a) Cushing's Disease(excessive production of hormone ACTH due to malfunctioning Pituitary or Adrenal gland)
 - b) Addison's Disease(insufficient production of hormones from Adrenal glands)
 - c) Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (body mounts an inappropriate immune response to some part of itself)
 - d) Diabetes Mellitus
12. Epilepsy (Rage Syndrome, though rare, has been documented)
13. Immune Sensitivity to vaccines, drugs, insecticides, anesthetics and tranquilizers
14. Temperament problems
 - a) Aggression
 - b) Fearfulness
 - c) Anxieties
15. Persistent Pupillary Membranes (iris to lens and iris to iris)(remnants of blood vessels which supplied nutrients to the developing eye lens. Usually absorbed by 4 -5 weeks of age)
16. Hip and Elbow Dysplasia (hip- ball at top of femur does not fit correctly into hip socket) (elbow- acconeal process (small bone) does not properly fuse with the ulna for proper elbow development)
17. Spondylosis (accumulation of calcium deposits around the spinal vertebrae)
18. Patellar Luxation ("floating knee cap") knee cap groove is not deep enough causing it to slip out of correct position)

19. Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) (abnormal cartilage growth seen in rapidly growing dogs, can be very painful)
20. Gastric Torsion (Bloat.. a true emergency)
21. Retinol Atrophy (early degeneration of the photoreceptors of the eye)
22. Retinal Dysplasia (arrested development of photoreceptors of the eye)
23. Entropion (lower lid)(inward folding eyelids)
24. Degenerative Myelopathy (loss of coordination in rear limbs with increasing weakness due to deterioration of spinal cord structures)
25. Myasthenia Gravis (decrease in neurotransmitter receptors resulting in fatigue and muscle weakness)
26. Cancers
 - a) Hemangiosarcoma (aggressive cancer arising from blood vessel cells, can occur anywhere, but primarily in the spleen, liver, heart, skin)
 - b) Spindle Cell Sarcoma (tumors that usually occur in connective tissues)
 - c) Mast cell Sarcoma(cancer arising from mast cells, often affects the skin)
 - d) Lymphosarcoma (cancer appearing in lymph nodes, spleen and other organs)
 - e) melanoma(cancer that arises from pigment producing cells, most often affects mouth, skin and toes)
 - f) Osteosarcoma (aggressive bone cancer, mostly affecting large (over 80 lbs) breeds
27. Cryptorchidism (undescended testes)
28. Monorchidism (one undescended testicle)
28. Vestibular Disorder (mostly seen in older dogs, imbalance characterized by head tilt, circling and incoordination)
29. Primary Glaucoma (increased pressure in eyeball which can quickly lead to blindness..a true emergency)
30. Umbilical Hernias (weakness in abdominal/chest muscle mass that allows other tissues/organs to leak through. Umbilical are located in the area of the belly button)
31. Zinc-Responsive Dermatosis (scaling and crusting of the skin in dogs that have a higher than normal requirement for zinc)
32. Eversion of the cartilage of the third eyelid (folding over of third or inner eyelid)
33. Amyloidosis(kidneys) in adolescent Akitas (abnormal deposits of protein called amyloid is deposited in the kidneys., which can lead to chronic kidney failure)
34. Susceptibility to onion poisoning (onions can cause hemolytic anemia)
35. Genetic Deafness
36. Enamel Hypoplasia (not previously seen in canines, now known as "Akita teeth") enamel does not form correctly, or is damaged during its development resulting in a defect of or a chipping off of the enamel covering, causing exposure of the underlying dentin.
37. Chondrodysplasia (abnormal growth of cartilage and bone, which results in skeletal dwarfism)
38. Oligodontia (too few or too small teeth).
39. Pseudohyperkalemia (seen in some akitas, does not affect health, but can affect blood tests if vet is unaware of this condition Akitas.) Hyperkalemia is low potassium.