

SUMMARY OF 2007 BFCA HEALTH SURVEY FOR BREEDERS

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The BFCA health committee mailed breeder surveys to BFCA members last fall, and encouraged all Bichon breeders to participate via email and advertising. The surveys have been available to download on the BFCA health web site www.bichonhealth.org since the fall of 2006. Data from the last major health survey for Bichons was collected in 1992, 15 years ago. Current data is needed to determine the prevalence of diseases in Bichons, which will be useful in prioritizing health research funds. The focus of this survey is to identify the top 10 diseases in Bichons, expressed as a percent value. We asked breeders to report on Bichons they bred from 1992 to 2006 that are healthy and those with diseases.

36 breeders submitted surveys, including 5 from Canada, for a total of 1000 Bichons. Although the health committee is disappointed by the low number of returns considering the substantial numbers of Bichon breeders and BFCA member-breeders, the surveys are adequate to determine incidence of diseases but more data would achieve more accuracy.

Autoimmune conditions continue to be the primary health issue in Bichons, but some of the conditions may or may not be immune-mediated. All diseases/conditions that have the *potential* to be autoimmune have an asterisk * preceding its name, and are listed below categorized by the particular body systems affected. The diseases listed under the blood diseases are truly immune-mediated diseases. For more information on autoimmune diseases, read this article on our health website: <http://bichonhealth.org/HealthInfo/DefAutoimmune.asp>.

*AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES	<u>Total 291 (diseases with * below)</u>
HEMATOLOGIC (BLOOD)	<u>Total 18</u>
A) *Autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA)	8
B) *Autoimmune thrombocytopenia (ITP)	10
TEMPERAMENT ISSUES	<u>Total 51</u>
A) Aggressive	9
B) Fearful	20
C) Separation anxiety	20
D) Standoffish	2
NEUROLOGICAL	<u>Total 19</u>
A) Head tilt	1
B) Vestibular syndrome (dizziness)	5
C) Dyskinesia (movement disorder)	1
D) Dementia (senility)	5
E) Seizures	6
a. < 1 year	2
b. 1-6 years	1
c. 6-12 years	3
F) *Granulomatous meningoencephalitis (GME)	2
EYES	<u>Total 95</u>
A) Cataracts < age 10	12
B) Cataracts > age 10	29
C) Punctate spots on lens	3
D) Glaucoma	2
E) Retinal dysplasia/folds	5
F) Corneal dystrophy	13
G) *Keratitis sica (dry eye)	13
H) Distichiasis	2
I) Visually impaired	2
J) Tear staining	14

Note: Tear staining may indicate these inherited conditions that cause excessive tearing: allergies, distichiasis (ingrown eyelashes), entropion (inverted eyelids), and clogged tear ducts. Tears and saliva are normally clear. Staining near the eyes, the beard, and areas the dog licks is sometimes caused by environmental factors such as minerals in drinking water and poor quality dog foods. Although tear staining is not a disease, the possibility of inherited eye diseases or allergies must be considered.

TEETH, MOUTH	<u>Total 181</u>
A) Dental cavities	34
B) Tooth loss	69
C) Gingivitis (gum infection)	54
D) Cleft palate	24

Note: Bichon owners need to realize the connection of bad dental care to poor health and systemic diseases. Bacteria from infected teeth can migrate to body organs. Dogs do not normally lose their teeth, even at an old age. Furthermore, tooth loss is a clear indication of inherited patterns such as weak under jaws and narrow muzzles.

EARS	<u>Total 38</u>
A) Deafness > 10 years	24
B) Frequent ear infections	14

SKIN AND COAT	<u>Total 233</u>
A) *Hot spots (recurrent)	40
B) *Hair loss	5
C) Rash, hives	5
D) *Pruritis (significant itching)	23
C) *Chewing/biting (persistent)	38
D) *Dermatitis (non-specific)	26
E) Surface tumors/warts (most >8 years)	47
F) Sebaceous cysts	43
G) *Allergies/atopy (inhaled allergy)	2
H) *Puppy strangles (facial skin infection)	1
I) Other	3

ENDOCRINE (Hormones)	<u>Total 26</u>
A) *Addison's disease	1
B) *Cushing's disease	11
C) *Diabetes	11
D) *Hypothyroidism (low thyroid function)	2

HEART AND CIRCULATION	<u>Total 28</u>
A) Murmur (persistent, unknown cause)	12
B) Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA)	5
C) Heart failure	10
D) Valve dysfunction (mitral or aortic)	1

RESPIRATORY	<u>Total 27</u>
A) Tracheal collapse	4
B) Kartagener's Syndrome (triad with PCD)	1
C) *Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia (PCD)	17
D) Chronic nasal discharge	4
E) Lung torsion (twisted)	1

Note: Many of the above respiratory listings are signs of diseases without an exact diagnosis, which requires a thorough examination by a veterinarian familiar with respiratory issues. Coughing, wheezes, and reverse sneezing may indicate tracheal collapse. Chronic nasal discharge, pneumonia, wheezes, reverse sneezing, and coughing may indicate PCD.

SKELETAL	<u>Total: 167</u>
A) Hip dysplasia (mild)	17
B) Elbow dysplasia	2
C) Legg-Calve-Perthes disease (hips)	1
D) Patellar luxation (knees)	88
E) Anterior Cruciate ligament tear (knee)	33
F) *Arthritis	23

G) Degenerative disc disease	2
H) Shoulder subluxation	1
GASTROINTESTINAL	<u>Total 109</u>
A) *Pancreatitis	15
B) Liver shunt	9
C) Microvascular dysplasia (liver)	1
D) *Hepatitis (liver)	3
E) Liver disease (no specific diagnosis)	4
F) Gastric ulcer (H Pylori)	1
G) Chronic gastritis (stomach)	3
H) Touchy stomach	6
I) Umbilical hernia	54
J) Gallbladder disease	2
K) *Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)	9
L) Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis	2
KIDNEY/BLADDER	<u>Total 103</u>
A) Struvite bladder/kidney stones	28
B) Calcium oxalate bladder/kidney stones	20
C) Combination bladder/kidney stones	1
D) Other bladder stone	1
E) Bladder/kidney stones unknown type	4
F) Urinary crystals without stones	1
G) *Bladder infections/inflammation (frequent)	23
H) *Kidney disease (with Cushings)	1
I) Kidney failure	13
J) Incontinence	9
K) Bladder polyps	1
CANCER (other than listed above)	<u>Total 28</u>
A) Hemangiosarcoma (blood vessels)	3
B) Mammary	7
C) Lung	4
D) *Leukemia	4
E) *Lymphoma	2
F) Sarcoma	1
G) Adenocarcinoma	1
H) Skin	1
I) GI tract	2
J) Bladder	1
K) Thymus gland	1
L) Nerve sheath	1
M) Adrenal gland	1
REPRODUCTIVE	<u>Total 12</u>
A) Vaginal stricture (narrowing)	1
B) Pyometra	1
A) Prostatitis	6
B) Cryptorchidism (testicles retained)	55
C) Reduced sperm motility	1
D) Litter aborted or absorbed	5
E) Infertility	4
F) Uterine dystocia	7
G) Poor libido	1

SUMMARY OF DATA FROM THE SURVEY

The total numbers of Bichons Frises reported on in the 1992 health survey were 2,262, and 1,000 Bichons in 2007. Below is a list and comparison of the top 20 diseases identified in the last 2 Bichon breeders health surveys. Following each condition is the # of Bichons reported with that condition, and the incidence expressed as a percent value.

The BFCA Health Committee would like to remind breeders that genetic diseases can surface many generations later, and the diseases go back to Bichons from the past including US and foreign Bichons, and yes, even puppy mill Bichons. All of the health issues listed below most likely have a genetic cause. Even the diseases that may be autoimmune have a genetic predisposition that causes the autoimmune response to a trigger event that insults the immune system.

TOP 20 HEALTH ISSUES IN BICHONS

Comparison Between 2 Health Surveys

<u>1992 Health Survey (2,262 dogs)</u>		<u>2007 Breeders Survey (1,000 dogs)</u>	
1. skin problems/allergies*	877=39%	skin problems/allergies*	233=23%
2. dental disease	339=15%	dental disease	157=16%
3. tear staining	211= 9%	patellar luxation/ligaments	121=12%
4. temperament issues	147= 6%	cryptorchidism	55=5.5%
5. cryptorchidism	122= 5%	bladder/kidney stones	54= 5%
6. umbilical hernia	90= 4%	umbilical hernia	54= 5%
7. bladder/kidney stones	67= 3%	temperament issues	51= 5%
8. chronic bladder infections*	61= 3%	cataracts	41= 4%
9. patellar luxation/ligaments	44= 2%	cancer	28= 3%
10. cataracts	40= 2%	heart diseases	28= 3%
11. heart diseases	33= 1%	deafness	24= 2%
12. stomach problems	33= 1%	chronic bladder infections*	23= 2%
13. ear infections	32= 1%	PCD*	18= 2%
14. hip dysplasia	24= 1%	liver diseases	17= 2%
15. arthritis	22= 1%	pancreatitis*	15=1.5%
16. cancer	21= 1%	tear staining	14= 1%
17. corneal dystrophy	19=.8%	ear infections	14= 1%
18. deafness	18=.8%	kidney diseases	14= 1%
19. PCD*	15=.6%	diabetes*	11= 1%
20. pancreatitis*	13=.6%	cushing's disease*	11= 1%

* Denotes diseases that have the potential to be autoimmune

Trends derived from the numbers above:

- 1) Skin problems/allergies continues to be the most common disease in Bichons, yet the incidence has decreased.
- 2) Dental disease continues to be the second most common disease in Bichons.
- 3) Incidences of these diseases have **increased**: patellar luxation, bladder stones, cancer, heart diseases, deafness, PCD, pancreatitis, liver diseases, kidney diseases, diabetes, cushings disease. Some increases may reflect more awareness of these issues and improved screening/examinations that revealed the presence of these conditions.
- 4) Incidences of these diseases have **decreased**: cataracts, tear staining, seizures, arthritis
- 5) Hemangiosarcoma is the 4th most frequently reported cancer (following mammary, lung, and leukemia) in the 2007 survey. None reported previously.
- 6) Incidences of PCD may be considerably higher due to so many reports of respiratory symptoms instead of actual diagnoses. Breeders need to be aware of the signs of PCD, and if present seek veterinary evaluation.
- 7) Incidence of cataracts of 4% in this survey is considerably less than the 13% incidence in the general Bichon population.

