



American Dutch Shepherd Association
dutchshepherd.org

The Dutch Shepherd is a generally healthy and athletic breed with a life expectancy of 12-14 years. The **American Dutch Shepherd Association (ADSA)** recommends that Dutch Shepherd breeders perform the following health screenings on all breeding stock:

- **Hip Dysplasia** – One of the following screenings should be performed to evaluate hip health:
 - **OFA Radiographic Hip Evaluation**
 - **PennHIP Evaluation**
- **OFA Radiographic Elbow Evaluation** – To assess and rule out elbow dysplasia.
- **OFA Eyes** – Annual eye screenings to detect hereditary conditions such as **progressive retinal atrophy (PRA)** and other eye diseases starting at 1 year of age.

Dogs that meet these health testing protocols are eligible for **Canine Health Information Center (CHIC)** certification, verifying their compliance with breed-specific health standards.

Additionally, the ADSA encourages breeders to conduct the following optional but recommended tests to ensure the health of breeding stock:

- **Degenerative Myelopathy (Common Variant) (DM)** – A DNA test to screen for this degenerative spinal cord disease.
- **Autoimmune Thyroiditis** – Recommended for the **Longhair Variety** to detect thyroid dysfunction.
- **Spongy Degeneration with Cerebellar Ataxia 1** – DNA testing is recommended for the **Shorthair Variety**, as these genetic conditions affect the cerebellum and can lead to severe coordination issues. This genetic variant is in the *KCNJ10* gene and can have multiple names, including Cerebellar Ataxia 1 (Belgian Shepherd Type).
- **Spongy Degeneration with Cerebellar Ataxia 2** – DNA testing is recommended for the **Shorthair Variety**, as these genetic conditions affect the cerebellum and can lead to severe coordination issues. This genetic variant is in the *ATP1B2* gene and can have multiple names, including Cerebellar Ataxia 2 (Belgian Shepherd Type).
- **Von Willebrand's Disease I** – A DNA test for von Willebrand's Disease, a clotting disorder, is recommended for the **Longhair Variety**.

Like other breeds that primarily herd, there is some concern for **anesthesia sensitivity**, which should be mentioned to your veterinarian before any procedure that involves general anesthesia. Careful monitoring and adjustments to anesthesia protocols may be necessary.

These screenings, along with regular veterinary care, contribute to the long-term health and well-being of Dutch Shepherds.

This Health Statement was updated and approved by the **American Dutch Shepherd Association (ADSA) Board of Directors** on October 14, 2024.