

INTERNET HEALTH DATA FOR BICHONS FRISES

Accumulated 2002-2007

Compiled by Vickie Halstead, Chairman BFCA Health Committee

The BFCA health committee has been answering health-related email questions for 9 years from Bichon owners in the US and other countries via the BFCA web site at www.bichon.org, which has provided significant information on health issues in primarily pet Bichons. In October of 2006, the health committee developed a BFCA **health** web site at www.bichonhealth.org, which is now the site that receives email health questions. We have observed a dramatic increase in emails with the advent of the new site, we suspect due to the increased visibility of the "Ask Us" section on the site. Anne Jones compiled a report of the data for the first 4 years, and we plan to share the data with you every 5 years.

The data in this report is not scientific, but does reflect patterns in Bichon health problems despite the fact that pet owners do not always provide an exact diagnosis. The data is derived from email questions about health issues, plus Health Incident Reports and Death Reports submitted by Bichon owners via the health web site, which are reports on individual Bichons, totaling 1,267 Bichons. Often Bichons reported on have more than one disease, all of which are included below. We suspect that commercial or backyard breeders bred the majority of the Bichons in this report, but occasionally we receive reports on Bichons bred by BFCA members or other show breeders. It can be assumed that any inherited disease found in the pet population can exist in show dogs, which makes this data **pertinent to anyone breeding Bichons**.

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 autoimmune heading are truly immune-mediated diseases, as are most of the blood diseases. For more information on autoimmune diseases, read this article on our health website: <http://bichonhealth.org/HealthInfo/DefAutoimmune.asp>.

*AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES	<u>Total 6 (746 including those * below)</u>
A) *Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)	4
B) *Myasthenia Gravis (neuromuscular disease)	1
C) *Lyme disease (deer ticks)	1
HEMATOLOGIC (BLOOD)	<u>Total 22</u>
A) *Autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA)	7
B) *Autoimmune thrombocytopenia (ITP)	7
C) *Von Willebrand's disease (bleeding)	2
D) *Anemia	4
E) Polycythemia (excess red blood cells)	1
F) Hyperlipidemia (excess fat)	1
TEMPERAMENT ISSUES	<u>Total 22</u>
A) Aggressive	11
B) Fearful	5
C) Separation anxiety	3
D) Shy	3
NEUROLOGICAL	<u>Total 102</u>
A) Head tilt	2
B) Vestibular syndrome (dizziness)	10

C) Dyskinesia (movement disorder)	19
D) Seizures	51 (total)
a. < 1 year	3
b. 1-6 years	18
c. 6-12 years	17
d. 12-18 years	13
E) Ataxia (difficulty walking)	2
F) White shaker dog syndrome (tremors)	2
G) Stroke	5
H) Brain tumor (no diagnosis of cancer confirmed)	9
I) *Granulomatous meningoencephalitis (GME)	1
J) Hydrocephalus	1

EYES **Total 187**

A) Cataracts < age 10	65
B) Cataracts > age 10	41
C) Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)	3
D) Glaucoma	4
E) Retinal dysplasia/folds	2
F) Corneal dystrophy	5
G) *Keratitis sica (dry eye)	12
H) Cherry eye	5
I) *SARDS (sudden acquired retinal degen. syndrome)	9
J) Corneal ulcer	2
K) *Uveitis (eye infection/inflammation)	1
L) Tear staining	38

Note: Tear staining may indicate these inherited diseases that cause excessive tearing: allergies, distichiasis (ingrown eyelashes), entropion (inverted eyelids), and clogged tear ducts. Staining of tears, the beard and saliva is most likely caused by environmental factors such as minerals in drinking water and poor quality dog foods (tears and saliva should be clear in color). Although tear staining is not a disease it is listed as such, reflecting the possibility of inherited eye diseases or allergies.

TEETH, MOUTH **Total 89**

A) Dental cavities	48
B) Tooth loss	22
C) Gingivitis (gum infection)	14
D) Cleft palate	2
E) Abnormal jaw growth	2
F) Missing teeth	1

EARS **Total 63**

A) Deafness < 6 years	7
B) Deafness > 6 years	23
C) Frequent ear infections	33

SKIN AND COAT **Total 461**

A) *Hot spots (recurrent)	40
B) *Hair loss	41
C) Rash, hives	18
D) *Pruritis (significant itching)	144
C) *Chewing/biting (persistent)	50
D) *Dermatitis (non-specific)	7
E) Surface tumors/warts (most >8 years)	48
F) Sebaceous cysts	2
G) *Allergies/atopy (inhaled allergy)	88

H) *Chewing tail	8
I) Mange (mite infestation)	5
J) *Puppy strangles (facial skin infection)	4
K) Fleas	6
ENDOCRINE (Hormones)	<u>Total 127</u>
A) *Addison's disease	4
B) *Cushing's disease	43
C) *Diabetes	69
D) *Hypothyroidism (low thyroid function)	11
HEART AND CIRCULATION	<u>Total 75</u>
A) Murmur (persistent, unknown cause)	23
B) Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA)	4
C) Heart failure	29
D) Cardiomyopathy (dilated, weak heart)	4
E) Valve dysfunction (mitral or aortic)	3
F) Coronary artery disease	2
G) Cardiac tumors	3
H) Arrhythmia (heart beat irregularity)	4
I) *Autoimmune vasculitis (blood vessels inflamed)	3
RESPIRATORY	<u>Total 103</u>
A) Tracheal collapse	23
B) Kartagener's Syndrome (triad with PCD)	1
C) *Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia (PCD)	18
D) Coughing	23
E) Reverse sneezing	10
F) Bronchitis	6
G) Pneumonia	5
H) Wheezes/asthma	10
I) Diaphragmatic hernia	1
J) Chronic nasal discharge	6
Note: Many of the above respiratory listings are symptoms, which may indicate diseases but there is not an actual diagnosis. Coughing, wheezes, and reverse sneezing may indicate tracheal collapse. Chronic nasal discharge, pneumonia, wheezes, reverse sneezing, and coughing may indicate PCD.	
SKELETAL	<u>Total: 206</u>
A) Hip dysplasia	16
B) Legg-Calve-Perthes disease (hips)	5
C) Patellar luxation (knees)	104
D) *Arthritis	31
E) *Rheumatoid arthritis	2
F) Lumbar (back) disc disease	45
G) Cervical (neck) disc disease	3
GASTROINTESTINAL	<u>Total 270</u>
A) *Pancreatitis	43
B) Liver shunt	15
C) Microvascular dysplasia (liver)	2
D) *Hepatitis (liver)	8
E) *Cirrhosis of the liver	1
F) Liver disease (no specific diagnosis)	34
G) Megaesophagus (dilated esophagus)	4

H) Esophageal stricture (narrowing)	1
I) Gastric ulcer	3
J) *Chronic gastritis (stomach)	19
K) Frequent vomiting	48
L) Frequent diarrhea	12
M) Hiatal hernia	1
N) Umbilical hernia	3
O) Gallbladder disease	6
P) *Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)	17
Q) Diverticulitis	2
R) Giardia	2
S) Rectal bleeding	4
T) Constipation	12
U) Anal gland problems	23
V) Eating feces	10
KIDNEY/BLADDER	<u>Total 213</u>
A) Struvite bladder/kidney stones (females)	16
B) Calcium oxalate bladder/kidney stones	14
C) Combination bladder/kidney stones	4
D) Bladder/kidney stones unknown type	121
E) Urinary crystals without stones	10
F) *Bladder infections/inflammation (chronic)	41
G) Kidney failure (1 after eating grapes)	5
H) Incontinence	1
I) Fanconi syndrome (kidney disease)	1
CANCER (other than listed above)	<u>Total 80</u>
A) Hemangiosarcoma (blood vessels)	15
B) Breast	6
C) Lung	13
D) *Leukemia	2
E) *Lymphoma	3
F) Lymphosarcoma	5
G) Multiple myeloma	1
H) Abdominal tumor, unspecific	1
I) Oral/throat	4
J) Skin	2
K) Eyes	1
L) Thyroid	2
M) Bone	3
N) Liver	10
O) Pancreas	4
P) Kidneys/bladder	7
Q) Anal glands	1
REPRODUCTIVE	<u>Total 12</u>
A) Vaginal stricture (narrowing)	1
B) Vaginitis	5
A) Prostatitis	1
B) Cryptorchidism (testicles retained)	5
MEDICATION REACTIONS	<u>Total 47</u>
A) Vaccine reactions	38
B) Reactions to flea/tick preventives	5
C) NSAID reactions (Rimadyl, Metacam)	4

MISC.**Total 427**

A) Housetraining issues	77
B) Pigment issues	50
C) Beard and/or saliva staining	17
D) General questions not related to health	283

In addition to the data above, we are tracking longevity in Bichons and cases of Dyskinesia. We now have confirmed reports of Bichons living until 19 to 21+ years, and unconfirmed reports to age 22 and 23. Although 19 cases of Bichon Dyskinesia were reported in the last 5 years, only 5 have been confirmed in this report, with a grand total of 8 confirmed since 1998.

No data was previously recorded on dental diseases, likely due to pet owners not considering dental conditions a health issue at the time, but that has changed along with more dental care products available on the market. Anne Jones wrote articles about dental care and conditions to encourage pet owners to realize the connection of bad dental care to poor health. Dogs do not normally lose their teeth, even at an old age. Furthermore, tooth loss is a clear indication of inherited patterns and weak under jaws.

The total numbers of Bichons Frises reported on from 1998-2002 were 1500, and from 2002-2007 were 2267. Below, the top 20 diseases are listed according to the Internet health data collected via the BFCA health information web site.

TOP 20 DISEASES IN BICHONS (2002-2007)	2002-2007	1998-2002 numbers
1. *Skin diseases/allergies/atopy	447	414
2. Urinary stones	155	125
3. Cataracts	106	102
4. Patellar luxation/ligament rupture	104	93
5. Dental disease	85	no data
6. *Cancer	79	54
7. Heart diseases	75	52
8. *Stomach conditions, vomiting	71	35
9. *Diabetes	69	34
10. *Liver diseases	60	57
11. Seizures	51	51
12. Lumbar disc disease	45	51
13. *Cushing's disease	43	48
14. *Pancreatitis	43	27
15. Bladder infections	41	17
16. Tear staining	38	no data
17. Ear infections	33	50
18. *Arthritis	31	11
19. Deafness	30	10
20. Tracheal collapse	23	14

*** 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.
- 2) Incidences of arthritis, and deafness have tripled.
- 3) Incidences of diabetes, bladder infections, stomach conditions (including frequent vomiting), tracheal collapse, and pancreatitis have doubled.
- 4) Diseases that have increased by about 25% are cancer, urinary stones, and heart diseases.
- 5) Hemangiosarcoma is the most frequently reported cancer. None reported previously.
- 6) Incidences of tracheal collapse and PCD may be considerably higher due to so many reports of respiratory symptoms instead of actual diagnoses.

