

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel



His large, dark eyes and melting expression are a true indication of his sweetness of character. Sturdy and hardy, in a range of four such lovely colours, it is difficult to know which to choose.

A happy dog whose pleasures are simple - he will enjoy a long country walk, meandering round the shops or sitting beside you in front of the fire. Good with children, he is a devoted companion, absolutely non-aggressive and easy to care for. His silky coat requires little attention and his ever-wagging tail shows how easy he is to please.

His origins are a little hazy; he goes back several centuries though not securing Kennel Club status until 1944, having been revived as a breed separate from the King Charles Spaniel. By the 1970s the breed was in the top twenty of British registrations and continues to attract large show entries. The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is larger than his relative, the King Charles, and less snub-nosed.

What about Health Issues?

If your puppy has come from a breed club member or an Accredited Breeder it is likely that it comes from health screened stock. While this cannot guarantee that your dog is free from a hereditary condition, health screening is one way that responsible breeders are reducing the risk of passing on pre-existing conditions. There are three main health issues currently screened for in Cavaliers:

- Mitral Valve Disease (MVD)
- Syringomyelia (SM)
- Eye conditions

Mitral Valve Disease

Mitral Valve Disease is a common health problem in older dogs of all breeds although it has been found to have an earlier onset in the Cavalier. The disease causes a degeneration of the heart's mitral valve often picked up as a heart murmur in younger dogs. Many dogs diagnosed with Mitral Valve Disease continue to live to a good age and enjoy a happy life. For Cavaliers, current guidelines recommend a check up for Mitral Valve Disease on an annual basis; this can usually be done by your own vet. Alternatively, most Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Clubs run health clinics with free or low cost checks by a Veterinary Cardiologist.

Syringomyelia

Known by some as "neck scratchers disease" where the dog is seen scratching in the air near the neck, usually when excited or on a lead. The term syringomyelia is a condition where fluid filled cavities (syrinxes) develop within the spinal cord. While some dogs show no or only mild symptoms, unfortunately, in some cases the condition progresses and deteriorates causing the dog pain and neurological problems. Medical interventions can help to alleviate health problems, but very sadly in some cases this is not possible.

Diagnosis for Syringomyelia is by MRI scan. Veterinary clinics operating low cost MRI scanning can be found on the Cavalier Club website together with advice and further information on Syringomyelia.

Eyes

The main inherited genetic eye conditions in Cavaliers are cataract (Congenital and Juvenile), and multifocal retinal dysplasia. Fortunately, both diseases are now much less common as reputable breeders test their stock prior to breeding. However, you should check for the condition if you intend to breed from your Cavalier.

Health Screening is an important part of illuminating health problems in any animal, but should you have concerns about any area of your dog's health always seek and follow professional advice from your vet.

Healthy Future

While a long and disease free life can never be guaranteed for any animal, it is hoped that health screening will eventually minimise conditions related to genetically inherited disease in Cavaliers. Further research, supported by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust is currently being carried out by the Animal Health Trust (AHT) and will aim to assist breeding from healthy stock. Every cavalier owner can help ensure that AHT research is as comprehensive as possible by submitting your dog's annual heart test certificate and MRI scan results to Dr. Sarah Blott at AHT. For details visit www.thecavalierclub.co.uk.

Breeding from your Cavalier

Breed clubs are a great way to meet other people and gain information from others who are just as passionate about Cavaliers. In the UK there is a national Cavalier King Charles Club and nine regional clubs. The clubs have information on everything from current research and health clinics to seminars, shows and 'Pet Pages'.

Breed Clubs will also be a useful source of information should you decide to breed from your Cavalier. Breeding can be enormously rewarding, but you must be aware of the responsibility which this entails. You should ensure that your dog meets recommended guidelines for MVD and SM and has a clear eye certificate issued by the British Veterinary Association/Kennel Club scheme. The Kennel Club also sets out requirements for current testing, and permanent identification of all breeding stock, and the KC Accredited Breeder Scheme on its website.

[Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Breed Club Contacts](#)

The above information is intended for guidance note only, for your information and use. This guidance is not intended to be a substitute for independent professional veterinary advice. Cavalier King Charles Spaniel clubs cannot be held liable for any loss or damage caused directly or indirectly as a result of the reliance upon any of the information and guidance given.