

# *West Lakeland Veterinary Group*

Breeding from your bitch can be a very rewarding experience however we like to make sure that people are well educated to ensure it is done responsibly.

Here are some questions to ask yourself before considering breeding .

1. ***Do both parents have clean bill of health?*** - It is well documented that certain breeds can have disease traits that may be passed onto offspring . Some of these diseases are listed below



**Radiograph showing hip dysplasia  
in a 12 month old border collie**

Hip and Elbow dysplasia -	<b>Labrador, G-Shepherd, Border Collie, Retriever amongst others</b>
Copper Toxicosis -	<b>Bedlington terrier</b>
Progressive retinal Atrophy -	<b>Irish setter , Mini Daschund, E Springer spaniel, Cardigan welsh Corgi</b>
Collie eye anomaly-	<b>Border Collie</b>
Entropion -	<b>Sharpei</b>
Urate bladder stones -	<b>All Dalmatians, Russian terriers, Bulldogs amongst others</b>
Congenital night blindness -	<b>Briard</b>
Hereditary Cataracts-	<b>Staffordshire Bull Terrier , French Bulldog</b>
Brachycephalic	
airway syndrome -	<b>British Bulldog, Pug , Boxers,</b>
Tracheal Collapse -	<b>Yorkshire terrier, Pekinese</b>
Atopic Dermatitis -	<b>West Highland terrier, French bulldog amongst others</b>

These are only a few of the conditions which can be breed associated. Please research your breed and where possible consider monitoring or testing for some of these conditions. Please remember that even if your dog is outwardly fit and healthy they may still be carriers of certain diseases and could pass that onto their offspring. Cross bred dogs are not immune from these conditions either. For more information please contact the surgery or visit [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)

## **2. Are all vaccinations, flea and worming up to date? -**

bitches have a lowered immunity during pregnancy and can be more prone to disease so it is important that all routine health commitments are up to date prior to mating. Certain medications must be avoided during the pregnancy.

## **3. Is it in the best interests of my dog? -**

Contrary to popular opinion there are no health benefits to your bitch associated with having a litter. It is advisable to wait until she is mature before breeding to try and reduce the risk of complication. If you decide against breeding we would always advise neutering as this most certainly does have health benefits.

## **4. Do you know what to expect during whelping? -**

Far too often people undertake breeding unaware of what to expect and when there may be a problem. Do some research on what to expect as your bitch goes into labour and be aware of potential problems.

## **5. Are you prepared for complications? -**

Thankfully the vast majority of whelping bitches do not get any complications during labour however a small percentage will run into difficulties and require veterinary assistance. This is more likely to occur in purebred animals and in particular breeds such as **British bulldogs, Chihuahua, French bulldogs.**

As well as the emotional stress this could cause you must be prepared to meet the cost both **financially** and with your **time**. If the bitch rejects the pups or has difficulty rearing them then you may be forced to intervene. This often involves intensive feeding **every 2 hours for 7-14 days!!** This could be a huge burden especially with large litters. The frequency of feeds then starts to reduce and weaning may take place around 4-6 weeks.

## **6. Can you find homes for the pups? -**

You must be confident of rehoming the pups before you undertake breeding. Unfortunately there are many homeless dogs in the UK and we do not wish to add to them.

*Our aim with this article is to encourage responsible breeding in order to look after the welfare of dogs in the UK. Should you wish to discuss any of the issues raised then please contact the surgery or visit our website.*