

Epilepsy

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Epilepsy (repeated seizure episodes) occurs in many animal species including dogs. There are many causes, but when the cause is unknown, it is characterized as “idiopathic” epilepsy. Heredity likely plays a role in many dogs with idiopathic epilepsy. The typical age of onset of seizures in dogs with idiopathic epilepsy is 1 to 3 years. Although epilepsy is not common in Shelties, the ASSA supports research that might result in a DNA test to identify epilepsy-causing genetic mutations if they exist in the breed.

The **Canine Epilepsy Research Consortium** (also known as the Canine Epilepsy Network) is a group of scientists who have agreed to collaborate in research efforts to identify epilepsy-causing genetic mutations in dogs. Their work is supported by the AKC Canine Health Foundation, National Institutes of Health (NIH), individual breed clubs and private donations. The ASSA has supported 2 of the projects:

The Mapping and Characterization of Canine Epilepsy Loci, AKC Canine Health Foundation Grant: 762, Dr. Gary S. Johnson, DVM, PhD, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Missouri.

SNP Association Mapping for Canine Epilepsy, AKC Canine Health Foundation Grant: 748, Dr. Ned Patterson, DVM PhD, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Minnesota.

How can you help? If you have a Sheltie with epilepsy, you can provide DNA samples of the affected dog and its relatives. Participation by dog owners is essential for the success of the research. To learn more about the canine epilepsy research and how to participate, go to: www.canine-epilepsy.net/basics/basics_index.html and click on “Canine Epilepsy Project”. Please note: Although the “Progress to Date” section gives the numbers as of September 1, 2006, the work is STILL active. The information just has just not been updated.

The Canine Epilepsy Network, www.canine-epilepsy.net/index.html, is an excellent website with understandable information about epilepsy, its causes, treatments, and living with epileptic dogs. After accessing the main page, click on “Canine Epilepsy Basics”.