

AMSC and CHIC FAQ Links

Q1 – What is CHIC?

A1 – CHIC, also known as the Canine Health Information Center is a centralized database established by the AKC Canine Health Foundation to aid breed clubs in collecting health information for their breeds, and to assist breeders by providing specific health information about dogs.

Q2 – How does my dog get a CHIC number?

A2 – Your dog must have a current CERF (Canine Eye Registration Foundation) examination and a cardiac auscultation (stethoscope exam) performed by a veterinary cardiologist and recorded on an OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) Registry Form. These reports need to be submitted to each registry for recording, and then each registry forwards this information to CHIC. The CHIC database is automatically updated. OFA results are automatically listed in the public domain, but the owner must designate the CERF result to be listed in the public domain for their dog to receive a CHIC number.

Q3 – What if my dog's test results are abnormal?

A3 – All dogs are eligible for a CHIC number regardless of the results of the required testing, provided the results are designated for the public domain. For abnormal Cardiac auscultation, appropriate follow-up with normal results can supersede the original abnormal auscultation. The only accepted follow-up is Echocardiogram or Doppler Ultrasound performed by either a cardiologist or an internal medicine specialist. If either of these two diagnostic tests indicates the dog is normal, the reports can be sent to OFA and the dog can be listed as "normal" in the database. Make sure the original auscult on the OFA form is included with the follow-up diagnostic report when sending it to the OFA.

Q4 – How much will it cost for me to submit my results for CHIC?

A4 – There is no additional charge for the CERF and OFA submissions to CHIC, only the regular fees associated with submission to these agencies. CERF and OFA results are automatically sent to CHIC periodically. If you perform a Myotonia DNA test there is a one-time fee of \$15.00 to set up the dog's record. If you perform a different non-OFA test and send it in to CHIC there is a one-time fee of \$25.00 to set up the dog's record. Once the record is established there is no charge for additional submissions of non-CERF/non-OFA test results. In all cases there is no charge for the submission of an affected dog

Q5 – For Myotonia testing, which testing lab should I use?

A5 – The AMSC’s CHIC database will only accept Myotonia test results performed at PennGen on or after October 1, 2008. The database will accept Myotonia test results from HealthGene only if the test was performed prior to this date.

Q6 – If a sire and dam have clear myotonia tests, what’s the point of testing their offspring?

A6 – Good question, one we asked as well, and the reason we designated this test as optional. The CHIC program will only accept first generation offspring as “clear by parentage” for a direct DNA test. This is due to the possibility of additional mutation in subsequent generations. There is a process of DNA verification for the “clear by parentage” designator, which can be done at the owner’s expense. We decided this testing is best used at the breeder’s or owner’s discretion.

Q7 – Why does a dog need to be at least 1 year old before the cardiac screening will count towards a CHIC number?

A7 – An “innocent murmur” can be ausculted in some younger dogs, so the OFA has established 1 year as the minimum age for certification that a dog is free of congenital heart defects. There is additional information about this on the OFA webpage at:
<http://www.offa.org>

Q8 – Since CERF exams are only good for 1 year, will my dog lose it’s CHIC number once the exam date has expired?

A8 – No, dogs do not lose their CHIC number. The database will list the CERF exam date so breeders will be able to determine if the exam is current. All CERF exams for the dog are listed in the database.

Q9 – How will this database help me as a breeder?

A9 – The database is open, so breeders can go online and search the available dogs to see the testing that has been performed and the results. But the database is only as good as what we put into it. Over time, if everyone participates we will build a larger database and be able to look at progeny and sibling records as well. This can help breeders reduce the risks of producing dogs with hereditary defects by providing information on health screenings for individual dogs and their relatives.

Q10 – If I have an affected dog and I do not want to disclose the CERF results, why should I submit my results? Who will see my results?

A10 – It is optimal if all results are disclosed, but we realize some people may not be comfortable with this. You can send in your CERF results and designate them as confidential, so the result will not be listed in the public domain. The dog will not be issued a CHIC number, but the results will still be entered in CERF. The club's health committee will receive periodic statistical reports on the various ocular defects reported in the breed, without the dog's identification. No one at the club level will know which undisclosed dogs are affected, we will receive only statistical information about the number of cases along with an age and sex distribution report.. This type of information helps the health committee monitor disease prevalence and direct health research funding.

Q11 – I notice a few dogs in the database have been tested for Hips. Is this something I need to do as well?

A11 – Any OFA testing done on a dog will show up in our CHIC database. Some breeders do perform other optional OFA testing for various reasons. While the health committee feels strongly that available testing should be used when appropriate, we did not opt to include these types of screenings as required testing at the present time. Our decisions are based in part on disease prevalence, and we do not have evidence that hip dysplasia and other orthopedic defects are a prevailing issue at the present time. We always have the option to add other testing if we feel it is warranted in the future. Nonetheless, having this type of information provides breeders with additional health information about specific dogs and we encourage and applaud those who take such a proactive approach.