

Dear Veterinary Surgeon,

I am a Clumber Spaniel, the largest of the Spaniel breeds, weighing up to 65lbs (29.5 kgs) for bitches and 75lbs (34 kgs) for dogs. I am a well boned breed. I have a large head, long body and am fairly low to the ground. I take my name from Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire.

As a breed I have an enormous amount of charm with a friendly outgoing character, and am generally quite easy going. I am often referred to as the 'aristocrat of the Spaniels'. I can be quite playful, mischievous, wilful and stubborn. I am very affectionate and am good with children and other dogs.

As with all dogs I do not come with a guarantee of a life free of problems. However, with care and a little understanding of the breed characteristics, most problems can be sorted out easily without requiring major treatment.

Ears should be routinely cleaned and excess hair underneath the ear flap removed. This will minimise the occurrence of ear infections. Clumbers that suffer from recurrent ear infections should be evaluated for possible food hypersensitivities.

Eyes – the Clumber eyelids are often 'v' or diamond shaped. Entropion may occur, but minor deviations of the lids should only require monitoring until the head has fully matured at about 2 – 3 years of age. Ectropion is sometimes seen, but this should not be confused with the normal shape of the eyelid which is looser than is seen in most other breeds. Clumbers are supposed to have loose skin on their heads and faces. With age some dogs develop dry eye.

Intervertebral Disc Disease

Disc disease is usually seen in the middle aged dog due to the disc rupturing after much wear and tear. Some cases respond well to medical treatment aimed at reducing the inflammation and swelling around the disc. Those with recurrent pain may require spinal surgery to remove the affected disc.

Hips – radiographs of a Clumber's hips are not good, but what would be crippling in another breed causes little or no problem in the Clumber. Clumbers have an acetabular conformation which is naturally shallower than that of retrievers and the like.

Skin, itchy skin problems are often resolved by a change of diet.

Panosteitis is the most common cause of lameness in a growing Clumber where there is no evidence of injury. This usually resolves itself once bone growth is complete.

Pyruvate Dehydrogenase Phosphatase 1 Deficiency is a rare condition in Clumbers. Basically Clumbers affected have profound exercise intolerance. It is a simple recessive gene trait, and a DNA test is available. Carrier dogs should not be bred to other carriers, but may safely be bred to clear dogs.

Breeding – although Clumbers usually have their first season around 9 months old, it is quite common for them not to have it until 12 to 14 months old, and this should not give reason for any concern. Many Clumbers are natural whelpers; the most frequently encountered problem is uterine inertia which may necessitate a caesarean section.

In general, Clumbers are a gentle, stoic breed. Their calm, accepting nature makes them enjoyable patients. My breeder believes that she has sold me this puppy in good health, but should you find something that could be potentially hereditary then my breeder would very much like to know about it, with as much detail as possible.

Further details about the breed can be found on the Clumber website at www.clumberspanielclub.co.uk