



ATTENTION DOGGIE LOWRIDERS - FIND OUT IF YOUR DOG IS AT GENETIC RISK FOR A SLIPPED DISC

Embark adds screening for intervertebral disc disease to its 170+ Genetic Health Disease Tests

Boston, MA (October 24, 2019) — Embark Veterinary, Inc., a global leader in dog genetics, announces the addition of intervertebral disc disease (IVDD Type I) risk mutation detection to its robust list of over 170 health conditions tested in its Breed and Health dog DNA kit. Dogs that have the IVDD mutation are at greater risk for developing this degenerative disease that affects a dog's spinal column and can cause back pain, limb weakness, and in some cases, paralysis. However, owners with affected dogs can take steps to mitigate the risk through lifestyle changes.

Dogs that have short legs and long bodies, like Dachshunds and Corgis, have a greater predisposition to Type I IVDD according to the original 2017 [study](#). IVDD genetic screening allows pet parents to mitigate the risk to their dogs, while detection allows breeders to work to reduce its frequency in their litters.

"It's hard to predict whether a mixed breed dog is at risk for IVDD unless they are tested for the mutation," said Adam Boyko, co-founder and chief science officer of Embark. "If owners know that their dog is at risk, then they can take steps to prevent a slipped disc event and learn the signs of slipped disc to be able to seek treatment immediately if it occurs."

IVDD is often undetectable until it is triggered by an event (such as jumping off a couch) that causes a slipped disc or damage to a disc that has been weakened by IVDD. Treatment for IVDD can range from conservative management, such as cage rest and pain control, to surgical intervention; physical therapy and rehabilitation are recommended as a follow up to all treatment methods.

Owners who know that their dog is at risk for IVDD can take steps to decrease the likelihood of a slipped disc event. Keeping a dog physically fit and in good

body condition is [associated](#) with reduced IVDD risk, at least in Dachshunds, a high-risk breed for the condition. Avoiding unnecessarily high jumps can reduce the risk of a slipped disc event. If a dog is predisposed to IVDD, it is important that the owner learn the signs of a slipped disc which include sudden back pain, reduced sensation in the toes, and/or scuffing or dragging of the paws. In the case of a slipped disc event, the earlier that a dog is seen and treated by a vet, the better the chance for recovery.

Matt Barton, Embark's chief technology officer, has already benefited from learning that his dog is at risk for IVDD, "We were saddened to learn that Aussie is at increased risk for IVDD. We were also thankful since now we can take precautions to reduce the risk - he is on a careful diet to prevent gaining weight, and he now has some doggy steps to safely get on and off the bed to keep him from making that jump."

All of Embark's Breed + Health kits will include the results for Type I IVDD risk. In addition, dogs who have previously been tested through Embark, will be alerted if their dog is predisposed to IVDD with Embark's ability to update results for most customers as additional tests are added to their screening capabilities.

About Embark

Embark Veterinary, Inc. launched in 2015 with a mission to end preventable disease in dogs. An Embark Dog DNA Test enables pet owners to learn about their dog's breed, ancestry, health, and what diseases may be in the future – all with a simple cheek swab. By using 10 times more genetic information than any other test available, the company offers the most accurate results on the market. Embark was started by two brothers, Adam and Ryan Boyko, who have a passion for scientific research and a lifelong love of dogs. Embark is an official research partner of Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Embark is the official dog DNA test of the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. For further information, visit Embark's website at Embarkvet.com, or follow Embark on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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