

**General health screening** for your Saluki should include a full physical examination by a veterinarian to look for any abnormalities or changes *yearly*.

If anything unusual is found, then further diagnostics are indicated and can include:

- A complete blood count and chemistry profile - to rule out or diagnose conditions possibly before the onset of any clinical signs. Breed variations must be taken into account when interpreting the results. Salukis are similar to Greyhounds in that they can have high packed cell volumes and low white cell and platelet counts normally. These can be misdiagnosed as polycythemia (or too many red blood cells) or a viral infection (which can lower the white cell count) or autoimmune thrombocytopenia (or too few platelets). Salukis also tend to have lower thyroid values, especially T4s, which can lead to an erroneous diagnosis of hypothyroidism. Testing for thyroid autoantibodies can indicate if the dog is going to develop autoimmune thyroiditis years before the onset of clinical signs.
- A cardiac examination by a board-certified cardiologist - if a heart murmur is heard or the rate or rhythm is abnormal. An ultrasound examination allows imaging of the beating heart and valves. This should include a Doppler examination to measure the velocity of the blood flow across the heart valves and an electrocardiogram (ECG) to assess arrhythmias. Radiographs can be taken to look for lung abnormalities.
- Abdominal radiographs and especially ultrasound examination - if profile results are abnormal and to examine the abdominal organs.

**Pre-breeding examinations** should include a reproductive soundness physical examination of the female and male. If there has been any history of problems, then a Brucellosis blood test and vaginal cytology and culture for the female and sperm count and prostate exam and culture for the male should be done.

Careful consideration should be given to the health history of the parents, grandparents and siblings of the sire and the dam. *If there is a family history of health conditions*, then these specific screening tests can be useful:

- Heart conditions - examination by a board-certified cardiologist. The dog can be OFA certified as normal if no cardiac abnormalities are detected.
- Eye problems - examination by a board-certified ophthalmologist and CERF registering the dog as free of any eye problems.
- Thyroid conditions - having a thyroid panel run. The dog can be OFA-certified if the results are within the all-breed normal range (some normal Salukis will have a low T<sub>4</sub>) and the testing is performed at an OFA certified lab.
- Lameness without documented injury - the dog can be radiographed and the films submitted to OFA for certification as free of dysplasia.

Other than radiographing for dysplasia, these examinations need to be repeated every year or two, since conditions can develop or change as the dog ages.

MaryDee Sist, DVM  
Saluki Health Research  
salukihealth@aol.com

