



Episodic Falling is a genetic disorder that occurs in Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. It affects all colours and both sexes. The good news is that there is now an inexpensive DNA test to determine whether your dog is a carrier of this heartbreaking neurological syndrome. This is a disease that we can now eradicate by breeding clear to clear (offspring genetically clear) or clear to carrier (offspring must subsequently be tested as some may be carriers) Affected dog/bitches should never be bred from.

Dry eye and curly coat, known scientifically as congenital keratoconjunctivitis sicca and ichthyosiform dermatosis, affects a dog's eyes and skin. Affected dogs produce no tears making their eyes incredibly sore. Their skin becomes very flaky and dry, particularly around the foot, and this can make standing and walking difficult and painful. This syndrome appears to be a problem unique to CKCS and most dogs diagnosed with the condition are put to sleep.

Early in 2011 Geneticists at the AHT identified a recessive mutation associated with Dry Eye Curly Coat Syndrome. A DNA test has been developed which will provide a useful diagnostic tool to the veterinary profession and dog breeders. The test will be available from 18th April 2011. The DNA test is specific to the mutation causing Dry Eye and Curly Coat Syndrome.

Breeders using the test will be sent results identifying their dog as belonging to one of three categories:

**CLEAR:** these dogs have two normal copies of DNA. Clear dogs will not be affected by Dry Eye Curly Coat Syndrome as a result of the associated mutation identified.

**CARRIER:** these dogs have one copy of the mutation and one normal copy of DNA. These dogs will not develop Dry Eye Curly Coat Syndrome themselves but they will pass the mutation on to approximately 50% of their offspring.

**AFFECTED:** these dogs have two copies of the mutation associated with Dry Eye Curly Coat Syndrome and will be clinically affected. Please note that it is possible for some Cavaliers to be affected by non congenital forms of ichthyosis or dry eye which will not be detected by the DNA test

## EPISODIC FALLING & DRY-EYE/CURLY COAT SYNDROMES

Inherited conditions in the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel



---

DNA test all breeding stock and wipe out these two conditions

## SYMPTOMS OF EPISODIC FALLING

To order an EF/DE/CC DNA test contact

The Animal Health Trust  
[www.ahtdnatesting.co.uk](http://www.ahtdnatesting.co.uk)

### Symptoms of Episodic Falling

- \* Freezing momentarily
- \* Freezing or walking with the head down and to one side.
- \* Stiffness in the back legs
- \* An apparent lack of coordination in the front or hind limbs
- \* A bunny-hopping gait
- \* Roached back with stiff hind legs (also may be a sign of back injury)
- \* Temporary loss of control in the hind legs
- \* Attempting to rise, only to fall
- \* Rolling or somersaulting
- \* Laying on one side with the back legs extended, limbs may twitch
- \* Apparent spasm
- \* Drooling while having other symptoms
- \* Retraction of the front legs, sometimes over the head
- \* Tightening of the muscles around the mouth with an inability to open the jaws
- \* Eyes may appear to bulge as the muscles of the face contract.
- \* The 'deer stalker' position where the front legs contract and the rear legs stiffen.



For More Information

[www.episodicfalling.com](http://www.episodicfalling.com)

Barbara Reese

Email: [tambro.babsreese@virgin.net](mailto:tambro.babsreese@virgin.net)

Episodic falling is a neurological condition, induced by exercise, excitement or frustration, in which muscle tone increases. This means the dog is unable to relax its muscles, becomes rigid and falls over. Affected dogs usually start to demonstrate clinical signs before one year of age, with most cases having their first episode aged four to seven months.

Early in 2011 Geneticists at the Animal Health Trust identified a recessive mutation associated with Episodic Falling. Episodic Falling syndrome is often difficult to diagnose as the syndrome can show similarities to other neurological conditions, such as epilepsy. A DNA test has been developed which will provide a useful diagnostic tool to the veterinary profession and dog breeders. The test will be available from 18th April 2011.

Breeders using the test will be sent results identifying their dog as belonging to one of three categories:

**CLEAR:** these dogs have two normal copies of DNA. Clear dogs will not develop EF as a result of the identified mutation. We cannot exclude the possibility that some dogs may show some clinical signs similar to those of EF but due to a different genetic or clinical cause.

**CARRIER:** these dogs have one copy of the mutation and one normal copy of DNA. These dogs will not develop EF themselves but they will pass the mutation on to approximately 50% of their offspring. We cannot exclude the possibility that some dogs may show some clinical signs similar to those of EF but due to a different genetic or clinical cause.

**AFFECTED:** these dogs have two copies of the EF associated mutation and are likely to present clinical signs of EF during their lifetime, with an age of onset of around 4-7 months. EF is a highly variable condition. Our research indicates that some dogs with the EF associated mutation will not show clinical signs of EF.