SEADOWN
VETERINARY GROUP
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The hereditary eye disease screening programme

This scheme is operated by the British Veterinary Association, in conjunction with the Kennel Club and the International Sheep Dog Society. It is in place to examine pedigree dogs for inherited conditions of the eye. 11 different conditions in 50 breeds are recognised, and a number of others listed as 'under investigation'. Litter screening is carried out on puppies of 6-12 weeks old, to check for congenital (present at birth), hereditary eye defects such as Collie Eye Anomaly and Multifocal Retinal Dysplasia. Individual eye tests are carried out on adult dogs prior to breeding as some conditions such as cataracts and retinal disorders do not develop until later in life.

More recently blood tests to check for some of these inherited diseases have become available. Their main advantage is that they detect carrier animals, as well as those clinically affected by disease, thus enabling more informed breeding choices. However these tests are only available for specific conditions and in certain breeds, so clinical examination remains the most useful tool in recognising established and potentially new forms of eye disease.

Ian Mason is the Eye Scheme Chief Panellist and continues to eye test at the Seadown hospital at Hythe and elsewhere in the country. Please contact the surgery for more information or to make an appointment. In addition, the names of panellists and breeds and conditions certified under the Eye Scheme may be obtained from BVA, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ Tel: 020 7636 6541 or visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk

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