



Chihuahuas are on a whole are a healthy breed that often live into their mid to late teens, some have been known live to 20! But like all dogs, Chihuahuas may have health issues. Health testing enables breeders to screen their stock for these.

The Chihuahua Club of America (CCA) believes it is import to breed dogs that are both beautiful and health. As such, we participates in the Orthopedic Foundation of America (OFA) Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) program. In order for a dog to be issued a CHIC number, the breeder/owner must have the following tests done: OFA Cardiac, Eye, and Patella.

So what does this mean?

With the cardiac testing, breeders are screening for early onset of Degenerative Mitral Valve Disease, a common older age disease in many small dogs. To do so, either a primary care veterinarian or board certified cardiologist listens to the dog's heart with a stethoscope for a heart murmur. This should be done on an annual basis while a dog is part of a breeding program. The dog should be at least 1 year of age.

The OFA Eye test is an examination of the dog's eye for ophthalmic disease. Only a board certified veterinary ophthalmologists (ACVO) can perform the eye exam. This can be done at any age.

Lastly, the Patella testing involves gently manipulating the dog's patella to classify it on a grade of zero (0) to four (4). Preliminary examinations can be done between 6-8 weeks of age. For OFA certification and CHIC recognition, the dog must be one (1) year of age or older.

In addition to the CHIC number issued by the OFA, the Chihuahua Club of America (CCA) recognizes Chihuahuas who are awarded a new CHIC number at our national specialty in the fall. We feel it is important for all our breeders to screen their breed stock and recognize public those who do so. The name of the dog and owner is read and the owner is issued a certificate from CCA. For more information on Chihuahua health, please visit the Chihuahua Club of America's Health Section at: <http://www.chihuahuaclubofamerica.com/health>

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