

Black Hair Follicular Dysplasia

A description of Breed Specific Follicular Dysplasia

Changes tend to be less extensive or severe than for colour dilution/colour mutant alopecia.

Black hair follicular dysplasia (BHFD) is a disorder confined to black coat regions affecting bicolour or tricolour animals within the first few weeks of life. Lesions are characterised by dull, dry, lustreless hair, hair fracture, hypotrichosis and scaliness. An autosomal recessive mode of inheritance has been determined for the Large Münsterländer. Histopathology is characterised by accumulation of melanin clumps within hair shafts, follicular lumina, root sheaths and hair bulbs. Hair shafts are irregular, bulging or replaced by keratinous debris.

BHFD and CDA are very similar with both sharing the same histological finding, what tends to separate both is that BHFD has an early onset. It is said that both represent different manifestations of the same disease

The various types of canine follicular dysplasia are considered to be genetic.

As a result, they are considered to be largely incurable.

Fortunately, most affected dogs are otherwise healthy, suffering only from their hair loss and possibly from some associated bacterial skin disorders or occasional sunburn.

This is not a life-threatening disorder. Actually, it is largely a cosmetic condition and is much more of a distraction to owners than it is a real problem for the affected dog.

BLACK HAIR FOLLICULAR DYSPLASIA (BHFD) Affected Breeds Include – Cocker Spaniel

Extensive alopecia develops in the affected dark-hair spots, while adjacent light-hair areas are normal. Darker hair areas often appear washed out, gray or bluish before hair is lost.

The bold areas become dry and scaly. Secondary pyoderma is common in the bold areas. It has been speculated that BHFD and colour dilution alopecia are the same entity, as both share histological findings and because some dogs with BHFD are born with gray and white rather than black and white coats.

Puppies appear normal at birth, but by 1 month of age begin losing black hairs only, progressing until all of these hairs are lost by 8-9 months of age. Black haired areas of the head and neck are less severely affected.

DNA test is available to identify carrier dogs that allows accurately identify normal, heterozygotes, and affected dogs.

Testing for Black Hair Follicle Dysplasia is available as part of the Breed Profile testing for Cocker Spaniels.