

GETTING A CHIC NUMBER FOR YOUR ESKIE

Most AEDCA members who own stud dogs and/or are breeders should do minimum health testing on their breeding stock. When the AEDCA Health Committee formed in the late 1980s, the major health concern across all breeds was Hip Dysplasia (HD). The Health Committee worked for many years in order to educate breeders and owners of the necessity to screen and select against Eskies which had HD.

As time passed, other diseases of concern became apparent, especially the progressive rod-cone dysplasia (pred) form of Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA). Since that disease is caused by an autosomal recessive genetic mutation, a genetic test could be developed to identify “normals” (Pattern A) from “carriers” (Pattern B), and “affecteds” (Pattern C). Such a test allows breeders to manage the breeding of their stock without producing affected dogs. Over time, the mutation might be eliminated from the breed.

The AKC initiated the Breeder of Merit (BOM) program which requires breeders to certify that their breeding stock have all health screening as required by their Parent Club. The program was updated in 2017 to designate advanced levels of Breeders of Merit who have produced offspring which have earned prefix titles, such as the AKC Champion of Record (CH), Obedience Trial Champion (OTCh), Master Agility Champion (MACH). The levels are Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. More information about the AKC BOM program can be found at: <http://www.akc.org/dog-breeders/breeder-of-merit/requirements/>

The application for advanced BOM recognition levels requires that breeders furnish proof that their dogs have indeed received the required health screenings. The applicant must either furnish copies of all tests with the application, or they may check a box stating that all results are available on the OFA website. If you are or aspire to be an AKC Breeder of Merit at any level, having CHIC numbers on your breeding stock easily documents that you conduct all Parent Club-required health testing.

Additionally, the AEDCA Board recently approved changes to the policies for the AEDCA titles Register of Merit/ Register of Merit Excellent (ROM/ROMX), Versatility Companion/ Versatility Companion Excellent (VC/VCX), and Hall of Fame (HOF) to allow the use of CHIC numbers to meet the health requirement for these titles.

What is CHIC?

The Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) is a centralized canine health database sponsored by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). Working with participating Parent Clubs, CHIC provides a resource for breeders and owners of purebred dogs to research and maintain information on the health issues prevalent in specific breeds by establishing a recommended protocol for breed-specific health screening and by recognizing dogs tested in accordance with that protocol.

CHIC requirements are set by each Parent Club, and the AEDCA established the requirements for the American Eskimo Dog. These requirements can be changed at any time, but those Eskies who have been issued a CHIC number prior to any change(s) retain their numbers even if requirements should change.

Having a CHIC number for all of your active breeding stock demonstrates that you have done all of the required testing recommended by the AEDCA. **Having a CHIC number does NOT mean that your Eskie is “normal” for all tests; but it DOES mean that you have done the screening and ALL results are in the public domain.** By making all of the information available to all breeders, you allow them to make informed decisions on whether to use your Eskies in their breeding program.

What's Required to Get a CHIC Number?

The following are required in order to get a CHIC number for your Eskie:

- **The owner MUST permanently identify each AED with a microchip and/ or tattoo number;**
- **The attending veterinarian MUST verify each dog's identity (either microchip or tattoo) when performing each test/ evaluation** (this requirement has been in effect since 2008);

- **The owner must have all tests performed on their Eskie as required by the AEDCA;** and
- **Have all test results designated as “Open” in the OFA databases.** To do this, the owner initials the appropriate box on each application form. Having all results designated as “Open” allows all breeders to make informed decisions when selecting mates for their Eskies. ***If your Eskie received an OFA registry number for an evaluation, your results are “Open”.***

Required Tests

The three required tests for an Eskie to obtain a CHIC number are:

- OFA Hip Dysplasia evaluation (minimum 24 months of age);
- Eye examination by a board-certified ACVO ophthalmologist (minimum age 24 months) and certified with either the OFA or CERF; and
- Progressive rod-cone dysplasia (prcd)-Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) DNA test: Test must be performed by Optigen or other licensed laboratory, and the test results must be registered with the OFA.

Many other tests are currently available which owners may elect to perform on their Eskies to help prevent future health concerns in the breed: cardiac disease, thyroid disease, patellar luxation, Legg-Calve-Perthes disease, elbow dysplasia, dentition, and DNA databases (for diseases such as degenerative myelopathy [DM], progressive rod-cone dysplasia form of Progressive Retinal Atrophy [prcd-PRA], and primary lens luxation [PLL]).

How to Determine If Your Eskie Has a CHIC Number

Some owners have done all of the required tests but do not have CHIC numbers on their Eskies. You should check the OFA database for each of your Eskies:

- Go to the OFA web site (<https://www.ofa.org/>) and search for your Eskie(s). Simply click on “Use Advanced Search” in the orange box at the top of the page
- When the page opens, enter all or part of your Eskie’s name in the appropriate blank. Mark one of the boxes, either “First Part of Name” or “Any Part of Name”. Scroll through the breed list to “American Eskimo Dog” and highlight it. Then click on “Begin Search”.
- You will see a Results list of Eskies. If your Eskie has a CHIC number, a small “CHIC” logo will appear after the name. Click on your Eskie’s name, and his/her individual page will open.
- Immediately below the individual dog information is a table which lists the tests which your Eskie has in the OFA database. If your Eskie has all three required tests listed above, then a CHIC number should be issued to your Eskie which will be included in the individual information at the top of that page.

What Is Permanent Identification?

The OFA requires that only those Eskies with either a microchip or tattoo as permanent identification will receive CHIC numbers. DNA profiles do **NOT** count as permanent identification for health testing purposes. While DNA profiles are able to uniquely identify individual dogs, they are not immediately verifiable as are a microchip or tattoo.

You can determine whether your Eskie was considered by OFA to have “verified permanent identification” by looking at each separate OFA registry number:

- The letters “NOPI” in the registry number (hips, eyes, etc.) indicate that your Eskie was NOT permanently identified when the exam occurred.
- The letters “PI” in the registry number indicate that your Eskie was permanently identified, but the attending veterinarian did not verify the number.

- The letters “VPI” indicate that your Eskie was permanently identified at the time of the exam, and that the attending veterinarian verified it and marked the box on the application.

For Eskies who did not have their IDs verified, owners can use the Verification of Permanent Identification Form (https://www.ofa.org/pdf/vpiapp_bw.pdf) on which the attending veterinarian will certify. This form allows the verified ID to be compared to previously supplied unverified permanent identification.

Only those dogs with **verified** permanent identification via microchip or tattoo will have their OFA hip and elbow information transmitted to the AKC for inclusion on AKC pedigrees and registration materials. For AEDs who were evaluated before this change in policy, they may receive a CHIC number based on “PI” in their registry number. If you have questions about your Eskie’s permanent identification, contact the OFA.

My Eskie’s Hip Results Are Missing

Reasons for not having Hip results include:

- **You have not had a Hip evaluation done on your Eskie.** Verify with your veterinarian that the test was done and the radiograph was submitted to the OFA. Some veterinarians do not submit radiographs of dogs which are obviously dysplastic.
- **The Hip evaluation on your Eskie was performed before he was 24 months of age.** The OFA will not issue a Hip number to an AED younger than 24 months. If that is the case, you must have another Hip evaluation done after the Eskie reaches 24 months of age.
- **Your Eskie’s permanent identification was not verified at the time of the test.** All Eskies MUST be permanently identified, AND the veterinarian must verify the ID and initial the appropriate box on the application. The OFA has a procedure in the event that the attending veterinarian forgot to verify your Eskie’s ID (see “What Is Permanent Identification?”). NO FEE IS REQUIRED.
- **You did not initial the box to make the results “Open”, or in the public domain.** If your Eskie did not receive a Hip number (meaning that he/she was determined to be “Borderline” or one of the grades of “Dysplastic”), the OFA will not release that conclusion unless the owners initials the appropriate box on the application. Owners must complete and submit the Form to Change from Semi-Open to Open (<http://www.offa.org/pdf/databasechange.pdf>) in order to place the results into the public domain. NO FEE IS REQUIRED.
- **Your Eskie was tested many years ago and did not receive a Hip number because it was not “normal”.** If your Eskie was evaluated prior to 2000 and determined to be “Borderline” or one of the grades of “Dysplastic”, then it did not receive a Hip number, and the results are “Closed”. In that case, you must complete and submit the Form to Change from Semi-Open to Open (<http://www.offa.org/pdf/databasechange.pdf>) in order to place the results into the public domain. NO FEE IS REQUIRED.

If your situation does not fit into one of these categories, then please contact a member of the Health Committee or the OFA to assist you.

My Eskie’s CERF or OFA Eye Certification Results Are Missing

Reasons for not having CERF or OFA Eye Certification results include:

- **You have not had a CERF or OFA Eye Certification exam done on your Eskie.** The Canine Eye Registry Foundation (CERF) is no longer performing eye exams. All OFA eye exams must be done by a Board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist.
- **The CERF or OFA Eye Certification exam on your Eskie was done before he was 24 months of age.** The OFA will not issue a CHIC number to an Eskie who was issued its CERF or OFA Eye Exam number before the age of 24 months. If that is the case, you must have another eye exam done after your Eskie reaches 24 months of age.

- **Your Eskie’s permanent identification was not verified at the time of the test.** All Eskies MUST be permanently identified, AND the ophthalmologist must verify the ID and initial the appropriate box on the application. The OFA has a procedure in the event that the attending veterinarian forgot to verify your Eskie’s ID (see “What Is Permanent Identification?”). NO FEE IS REQUIRED.
- **Your Eskie had an eye exam done after 24 months, but you did not submit the results to CERF or OFA.** Owners MUST submit their portion of the application to OFA. Owners MUST submit the results of the exam with the proper fee to OFA **within one year of the exam date**. If the exam was done more than one year ago, you must have another eye exam done and submit the new results within one year.
- **You did not initial the box to make the results “Open”, or in the public domain.** If your Eskie did not receive an eye certification number (which means that he/she was not “normal”), the OFA will not release that conclusion unless the owners initials the box on the application. Owners must complete and submit the Form to Change from Semi-Open to Open (<http://www.offa.org/pdf/databasechange.pdf>) in order to place the results into the public domain. NO FEE IS REQUIRED.

If your situation does not fit into one of these categories, then please contact a member of the Health Committee or the OFA to assist you.

My Eskie’s prcd-PRA Results Are Missing

The prcd-PRA registry is based on results of genetic testing. An American Eskimo Dog can either be individually tested or be proven to be “Clear by Parentage” (CBP).

Reasons for not having the results of an individual’s DNA test for prcd-PRA in the OFA database include:

- **You did not have a DNA test for prcd-PRA done on your Eskie by Optigen or one of their licensed laboratories.** Test results from a laboratory which is not licensed by Optigen will **NOT** be accepted by OFA.
- **Your Eskie’s permanent identification was not verified at the time of the test.** All Eskies MUST be permanently identified, AND the veterinarian must verify the ID and initial the appropriate box on the application. This requirement applies to puppies as well as adults. The OFA has a procedure in the event that the attending veterinarian forgot to verify your Eskie’s ID (see “What Is Permanent Identification?”). NO FEE IS REQUIRED.
- **Your Eskie had a test done by a licensed lab, but you did not submit the results to OFA.** Owners MUST submit the results using the Application for DNA Based Genetic Database (http://www.ofa.org/pdf/dnaapp_bw.pdf), filling it out completely, attaching a copy of your Eskie’s test results, supplying the appropriate fee, and submitting it to the OFA at the address provided. At the top of the application, write in “prcd-PRA for the American Eskimo Dog”. DNA test results do not have an “expiration date”. **“Affected” Eskies (Pattern C) are registered at no charge.**

Reasons for not having Clear by Parentage results include:

- **One or both parents were not tested and registered in the OFA database as “normal” (Pattern A).** Both parents MUST be tested as “normal” and registered in the OFA database. The tests on the parents MUST be performed by a licensed laboratory.
- **One or both parents are registered in the OFA database as “Clear by Parentage”.** The OFA will only register the first generation as “Clear by Parentage”. The succeeding generation MUST be tested.
- **You did not collect DNA samples from the parents and the offspring and submit them to the AKC.** The registry (AKC) must have DNA on file from both parents and the offspring before parentage verification can be done.
- **You did not submit a Parentage Evaluation Request Form to the AKC.** The Parentage Evaluation Request Form is available on the AKC website. You will need the full registration numbers and DNA profile numbers of the sire, dam, and all offspring (produced by the same parents) that you want evaluated. If you do not own the sire, dam, and/or any offspring, then one of those owners must sign in the appropriate place on the form for each Eskie that you do not own. Submit the request and appropriate fee to

AKC and allow 8 to 12 weeks for processing. You will receive a letter which documents that the parents are those identified on the offsprings' AKC registration certificates.

• ***You did not submit the Application for DNA Based Genetic Database Application to the OFA.*** Owners must use the Application for DNA Based Genetic Database (http://www.ofa.org/pdf/dnaapp_bw.pdf) and write "pred-PRA for the American Eskimo Dog as Clear By Parentage" in the blank at the top of the form. Send the completed form, appropriate fee, and a copy of the Parentage Report to the OFA at the address provided.

If your situation does not fit into one of these categories, then please contact a member of the Health Committee or the OFA to assist you.

Mistakes DO Happen

OFA has all of their forms available on their website except for Eye and Cardiac applications which are available from the appropriate specialist at the time of the exam. Open the application and complete it using Adobe Acrobat and print. Take the completed application with you for your veterinarian to use during the exam.

For Eye and Cardiac exams, the attending specialist will provide the OFA forms at the time of the exam. After the exam, you will be given one part of the form to complete and submit to OFA for your Eskie.

When you receive any certificate from OFA, check to ensure that your Eskie's name, AKC registration number, and all other information are correct. If you find an error, check your copy of the application to ensure that YOU submitted correct information.

If you find an error that you made, it can be corrected:

- Contact the OFA at the telephone or email provided on their webpage to ask whether they charge a fee to make the correction (it was *your* mistake).
- If your application contained correct information and OFA made the mistake, contact them at the telephone or email provided on their webpage. If OFA makes a mistake, they will correct it at no charge.

If your Eskie's name or AKC number is incorrect, this can cause your Eskie to not receive a CHIC number.

Getting a CHIC Number and Certificate

The OFA tracks the status of each AED regarding its completion of each of the three required tests. When the OFA records show that all of the required tests have been completed, the OFA automatically issues a certificate to the owner of record. NO FEE IS REQUIRED.