

Dear Tibetan Terrier owner,

We would like to update you on the status of the DNA test for NCL.

As we acknowledged last month, a problem with the design of our test became apparent when we began testing primarily with samples collected by cheek swab. We redesigned the test, and believed we could begin reporting revised results last week. However, we then found that there were some exceptions, or “impossible” results with the new test (a normal parent producing an affected offspring, affected parent with normal offspring, or elderly dogs testing affected but still alive, which are all impossible). On Friday, we identified a rare, neutral mutation site nearby the location of the mutation that causes NCL. This second mutation has no relationship to the disease, but a mutation at this second site caused the redesigned test to read incorrectly in the few dogs where it is present. Another redesign of the test is being evaluated now, and when we are confident that it will produce correct results without fail, we will again retest all the samples that have given carrier or affected results previously.

We want to make clear that the mutation causing NCL is not in question. The problem has been with the design of the test that allows the mutation site to be evaluated. Unfortunately, our first 2 designs of the test resulted in appearance of rare, but not unheard of, problems that can happen with DNA testing. Real life DNA research and testing is not as fast or clear-cut as it appears on TV shows. Our efforts are focused on resolving this and getting all concerned TT owners accurate test results. We ask your patience as we work through this. We understand that you all want results as soon as possible, and we will get them to you – but we want them to be correct, more than we want them to be speedy.

We apologize for any distress or concern this situation has caused. Please rest assured that we will report results just as soon as we can be certain that they are reliable and correct.

Thank you,

Liz Hansen, on behalf of the staff at AMGL & Dr Gary Johnson
Animal Molecular Genetics Laboratory
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