

University of Minnesota/AKC/CHF Thyroid Study: FAQ

1. What is the purpose of the study? To determine the concentration of several thyroid hormones in serum taken from healthy, normal purebred dogs. These values will be used to generate breed-specific reference intervals for thyroid hormones and will help us diagnose hypothyroidism more accurately. We will be looking at the data from the basis of breed and determining how reference intervals from one breed of dog compares with other breeds.

2. What type of dog can be enrolled? We need healthy, AKC registered dogs from 1 to 8 years of age. They can be male, female (non-pregnant), spayed or neutered. If intact, we need to collect samples from bitches when they are not in heat.

3. Are there other restrictions? It is vital that we do not include samples from dogs who have been treated with medications (in the past 12 weeks), who have chronic illness or who are unwell. This is because many drugs and illnesses are known to affect the measurements of thyroid hormones. If we include samples from sick dogs, our reference intervals will not be accurate.

Because we do not know the effects of supplements and herbal medicines, we prefer to have dogs enrolled who are not taking them- especially those that contain kelp (which may affect thyroid testing). If your dog is taking vitamins or supplements, please state the name and dose on your history form. We will evaluate them on the day of the clinic. Heartworm and flea/tick treatments are fine -Cosequin is also allowed. We prefer to sample dogs 6-12 hours after eating.

4. What is the procedure for taking samples from my dog? You will be asked to fill out a health history and a client consent form. We will also ask you to collect a free catch urine sample from your dog. A veterinarian will give your dog a physical exam and will collect two blood samples and may help you collect a urine sample. Your dog will not be shaved.

5. What are the samples used for? An important feature of our study is that all dogs will undergo health screening before thyroid hormones are measured. Using the blood samples we collect, our laboratory (University of Minnesota) will do a complete blood count, a chemistry profile and a urinalysis. Data from these laboratory tests will be used to determine if samples from your dog will be submitted for thyroid testing.

6. What happens if the health screening data from your dog does not meet our study criteria? Your dog will not go forward into the thyroid testing part of the project. This may be due to several reasons and we will send the laboratory data to you so that you can review it with your veterinarian. The abnormal laboratory data may indicate an underlying health problem. In some cases, laboratory abnormalities are due to sample collection or other non-health issues and do not indicate a problem with your dog. Because our study criteria are stringent, we may reject healthy dogs that are just slightly off our cut-off values. We recommend that you take questionable results to your veterinarian for their review (Study investigators will be unable to consult on individual dogs, beyond providing the laboratory data that we collect). Because they know you and your dog, your personal veterinarian is the best resource for you and we will provide a letter to your vet that describes our lab findings (if abnormalities were found). Your veterinarian may choose to repeat the test to confirm the results, to treat your dog based on the results we provide or to do nothing and wait to see if symptoms arise. We are happy to provide the laboratory data we generate to help you and your vet evaluate your pet's health.

7. Is there a way to re-enroll in the study after health concerns are cleared up?

There may be a way to continue, please contact Dr. Davies (rdavies@umn.edu) by email to discuss this possibility.

8. Is there a benefit for the volunteers? Dog owners will receive the results of all health screening and thyroid testing for their records or for review with their veterinarian. In addition you will be contributing to research which will yield practical and helpful data for your breed of interest.

9. How long will it take for results to be returned to the owners? Because this is a research project, samples will be batched prior to measurement in order to achieve the most economical pricing. Typically, results will be sent to volunteers within **1 to 4 months** of the sample collection day. We will notify you by email if your dog does not pass the initial screening.

10. Should I contact the laboratory to discuss my results? Because this is a research study, we ask that you not contact the University of Minnesota Diagnostic Laboratory or Veterinary Hospital to discuss results. The staff in the laboratory will not have access to the AKC study data and will not be able to answer questions.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!