

Does your Golden Retriever have a CHIC Number? Do you know what the requirements are for a Golden to obtain a CHIC number? Check out this information from the OFA and CHIC websites:

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) foundation formed in 1966 with the following objectives:

1. To collate and disseminate information concerning orthopedic and genetic diseases of animals.
2. To advise, encourage and establish control programs to lower the incidence of orthopedic and genetic diseases.
3. To encourage and finance research in orthopedic and genetic disease in animals.
4. To receive funds and make grants to carry out these objectives.

What is CHIC?

The Canine Health Information Center, also known as CHIC, is a centralized canine health database sponsored by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). CHIC, working with participating parent clubs, 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 recognizing dogs tested in accordance with that protocol

CHIC also maintains a DNA Bank that collects and stores canine DNA samples along with corresponding genealogic and phenotypic information to facilitate future research and testing aimed at reducing the incidence of inherited disease in dogs.

If your dog has DNA banked in the CHIC DNA Repository and has had any significant health status changes since filling out the original phenotypic health survey, please remember to email the OFA with updates. Include the dog's name/number, as well as any updated diagnosis. As the number of researchers interested in this resource continues to increase, it is important to keep the health histories up to date, as that is typically the primary selection criteria for supplying samples to a given research proposal. Email updates to: ofa@offa.org.

The Golden Retriever Club of America has the following required clearances for Golden Retrievers to receive a CHIC number. Having a CHIC number means your dog has passed all the required testing.

Hip Dysplasia

- OFA Evaluation - OR
- OVC Evaluation (prior to January 1 2013) – OR
- PennHIP Evaluation

Elbow Dysplasia

- OFA Evaluation - OR
- OVC Evaluation (prior to January 1, 2013)

Eye Examination by a boarded ACVO Ophthalmologist (evaluations annually for the dog's lifetime)

- Results registered with OFA - OR
- Results registered with CERF (Author's note: CERF ceased its registry in June, 2014)
- Note that the eye clearances are required for annually for the LIFETIME of the dog. With some eye disorders appearing late in life, it is not longer sufficient to exam dogs only to the age of seven or eight.

Congenital Cardiac Database

- OFA evaluation at 12 months or older, with exam by cardiologist

*Note – In addition to the breed specific requirements above, a CHIC requirement across all participating breeds is that the dog must be permanently identified via microchip or tattoo in order to qualify for a CHIC number.

(From the Canine Health Information Centre web site: <http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/>)

In the early years, when hip dysplasia was seen to be a problem in the breed, the Golden Retriever Club of America maintained a Club registry of hip x-rayed and cleared dogs. Subsequently, the GRCA, along with the German Shepherd Club of America was very instrumental in the establishment of the OFA in 1966. How fortunate for our dogs that OFA has taken the lead in health testing, research and provision of a searchable data base for health clearances.

Have you thought about sending a DNA sample to the DNA Bank? Many Clubs, including the GRCA at its National Specialty, offer DNA clinics. It is an easy thing to do. Here is what the CHIC web site says are the benefits of banking your dog's DNA:

- Facilitate more rapid research progress by expediting the sample collection process
- Provide researchers with optimized family groups needed for research
- Allow breeders to take advantage of future DNA based disease tests as they become available
- Foster a team environment between breeders/owners and the research community improving the likelihood of genetic discovery.

So if a DNA test becomes available for a genetic disorder in the future and your dog is no longer alive, it would be possible to test your dog and know its status. Wouldn't that be helpful to a breeding program?