

Your **Pembroke Welsh Corgi**

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



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Your Pembroke Welsh Corgi

Pembroke Welsh Corgis: What a Unique Breed!

Your dog is special! She's your best friend, companion, and a source of unconditional love. Chances are that you chose her because you like Corgis and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- An excellent companion, family, and working dog
- Outgoing and friendly personality
- Athletic and agile
- Good with children and other pets
- Above-average intelligence and trainability when positive reinforcement training methods are used
- People-oriented and eager to please

However, no dog is perfect! You may have also noticed these characteristics:

- Has a tendency to herd, including small children
- Might be bossy and overprotective if not well socialized early
- Needs regular exercise and diet regulation to avoid weight gain
- Must be given mental stimulation or she may bark and chew
- May be territorial when it comes to cats and other dogs
- Willful and stubborn if you don't show strong leadership

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! She may be small, but you'll love her big dog attitude.

The Pembroke Welsh Corgi was bred from the Cardigan Welsh Corgi, and the two were actually considered the same breed until 1934. Corgis were bred to be quick, to herd livestock, and to be short enough to slip under the legs of kicking cattle. Corgis are naturally active, and without



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General Health Information for your Pembroke Welsh Corgi

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. Unfortunately, your Pembroke is more likely than other dogs to have problems with her teeth. Dental disease starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. If we don't prevent or treat dental disease, your buddy may lose her teeth and be in danger of damage to her kidneys, liver, heart, and joints. In fact, your Corgi's life span may even be cut short by one to three years! We'll clean your dog's teeth regularly and let you know what you can do at home to keep those pearly whites clean.

Infections

Pembroke Welsh Corgis are susceptible to bacterial and viral infections — the same ones that all dogs can get — such as **parvo**, **rabies**, and **distemper**. Many of these infections are preventable through vaccination, which we will recommend based on her age, the diseases we see in our area, and other factors.

Obesity

Obesity can be a significant health problem in Pembroke Welsh Corgis. It is a serious disease that may cause or worsen joint problems, metabolic and digestive disorders, back pain, and heart disease. Though it's tempting to give your pal food when she looks at you with those soulful eyes, you can "love her to death" with leftover people food and doggie treats. Instead, give her a hug, brush her fur or teeth, play a game with her, or perhaps take her for a walk. She'll feel better, and so will you!

Parasites

All kinds of worms and bugs can invade your Corgi's body, inside and out. Everything from fleas and ticks to ear mites can infest her skin and ears. Hookworms, roundworms, heartworms, and whipworms can get into her system in a number of ways: drinking unclean water, walking on contaminated soil, or being bitten by an infected mosquito. Some of these parasites can be transmitted to you or a family member and are a serious concern for everyone. For your canine friend, these parasites can cause pain, discomfort, and even death, so it's important that we test for them on a regular basis. We'll also recommend preventive medication as necessary to keep her healthy.

Spay or Neuter

One of the best things you can do for your Pembroke is to have her spayed (neutered for males). In females, this means we surgically remove the ovaries and usually the uterus, and in males, it means we surgically remove the testicles. Spaying or neutering decreases the likelihood of certain types of cancers and eliminates the possibility of your pet becoming pregnant or fathering unwanted puppies. Performing this surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to identify and address some of the diseases your dog is likely to develop. For example, if your pet needs hip X-rays or a puppy tooth extracted, this would be a good time—it's more convenient for

proper exercise or training, they may express their working instincts by herding the family, including children and other pets. Corgis are generally eager to please and with proper socialization can be friendly with strangers as well.

Your Pembroke Welsh Corgi's Health

We know that because you care so much about your dog, you want to take good care of her. That is why we have summarized the health concerns we will be discussing with you over the life of your Pembroke. By knowing about health concerns specific to Pembroke Welsh Corgis, we can tailor a preventive health plan to watch for and hopefully prevent some predictable risks.

Many diseases and health conditions are genetic, meaning they are related to your pet's breed. There is a general consensus among canine genetic researchers and veterinary practitioners that the conditions we've described herein have a significant rate of incidence and/or impact in this breed. That does not mean your dog will have these problems; it just means that she is more at risk than other dogs. We will describe the most common issues seen in Pembroke Welsh Corgis to give you an idea of what may come up in her future. Of course, we can't cover every possibility here, so always check with us if you notice any unusual signs or symptoms.

This guide contains general health information important to all canines as well as the most important genetic predispositions for Pembroke Welsh Corgis. This information helps you and us together plan for your pet's unique medical needs. At the end of the booklet, we have also included a description of what you can do at home to keep your Corgi looking and feeling her best. You will know what to watch for, and we will all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

you and easier on your friend too. Routine blood testing prior to surgery also helps us to identify and take precautions against common problems that increase anesthetic or surgical risk. Don't worry; we'll discuss the specific problems we will be looking for when the time arrives.

Genetic Predispositions for Pembroke Welsh Corgis

Heart Disease

Pembrokes are susceptible to a condition called [patent ductus arteriosus](#), or PDA, in which a small vessel that carries blood between two parts of the heart does not close as it should shortly after birth. This results in too much blood being carried to the lungs, causing fluid build-up and strain on the heart. Outward signs may be mild or severe, including coughing, fatigue during exercise, weight loss, shortness of breath, and weakness in the hind limbs. We listen for a specific type of heart murmur to diagnose this problem during your pet's examinations. If your pal has this condition, we may recommend surgery to close the problematic vessel.

Bleeding Disorders

There are several types of inherited bleeding disorders that occur in dogs. They range in severity from very mild to very severe. Many times a pet seems normal until a serious injury occurs or surgery is performed, and then severe bleeding can result. Von Willebrand's disease is a blood clotting disorder frequently found in Corgis. We'll conduct diagnostic testing for blood clotting times or a specific DNA blood test for Von Willebrand's disease and other similar disorders to check for this problem before we perform surgery.

Back Problems

[Intervertebral disc disease \(IVDD\)](#) is a common condition in dogs with long backs and short legs, including Corgis. The disease is caused when the jelly-like cushion between one or more vertebrae slips or ruptures, causing the disc to press on the spinal cord. If your dog is suddenly unable or unwilling to jump or go up stairs, is reluctant to move around, has a hunched back, cries out, or refuses to eat or go potty, he is likely in severe pain. He may even experience sudden paralysis—he may drag his back feet or be unable to get up or use his back legs. If you see these symptoms, don't wait! Call us or an emergency clinic immediately! In many cases involving paralysis, we'll recommend surgical removal of the ruptured discs (within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms for the best results). For less severe cases, rest and medication may resolve the problem. And as with so many other diseases, weight control helps reduce the risk of IVDD. You should also provide ramps or steps for your pet from puppyhood on to prevent your dog from stressing his back by jumping on and off of the furniture.

Hip and Elbow Dysplasia

Both hips and elbows are at risk for [dysplasia](#), an inherited disease that causes the joints to develop improperly and results in arthritis. Stiffness in your Pembroke's elbows or hips may become a problem for him, especially as he matures. You may

notice that he begins to show lameness in his legs or has difficulty getting up from lying down. We can treat the arthritis—the sooner the better—to minimize discomfort and pain. We'll take X-rays of your dog's bones to identify issues as early as possible. Surgery is also sometimes a good option in severe and life-limiting cases. And keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering!

Degenerative Myelopathy

[Degenerative myelopathy](#) is a neurologic condition, similar to ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease in people, that causes weakness and poor nerve function in the hind legs. It affects Corgis more frequently than other breeds. If your dog has this disease, he will become increasingly weak and disabled in the hind legs, eventually suffering from paralysis in his hindquarters, which also leads to incontinence. Rehabilitation, exercise, acupuncture, and dietary supplements can be helpful, but there is no cure for degenerative myelopathy. A genetic test is available to determine whether your dog is at risk for this heritable disease.

Eye Problems

Not many things have as dramatic an impact on your dog's quality of life as the proper functioning of his eyes. Unfortunately, Pembroke Welsh Corgis can inherit or develop a number of different eye conditions, some of which may cause blindness if not treated right away, and most of which can be extremely painful! We will evaluate his eyes at every examination to look for any signs for concern.

- [Cataracts](#) are a common cause of blindness in older Pembrokes. We'll watch for the lenses of his eyes to become more opaque—meaning they look cloudy instead of clear—when we examine him. Many dogs adjust well to losing their vision and get along just fine. Surgery to remove cataracts and restore sight may also be an option.
- [Progressive retinal atrophy \(PRA\)](#) is an inherited disease in which the eyes are genetically programmed to go blind. Unfortunately, Corgis are a bit more likely than other dogs to have this condition. PRA is not painful, but also not curable. In dogs with this gene, early symptoms such as night blindness or dilated pupils generally begin around three to five years of age. A genetic test is available for this condition.
- [Distichiasis](#) is a condition caused by extra hairs that grow inside of the eyelid and rub on the surface of the eye. This is one of the most commonly inherited diseases in dogs, and your Pembroke is more likely than other dogs to develop this painful condition. If untreated, these abnormal hairs can cause corneal ulcers and chronic eye pain. Several treatment options are available, and the prognosis is good once the hairs have been permanently removed.
- Sometimes small strands of tissue meant to disappear soon after birth remain attached to the iris. This condition is called [persistent pupillary membrane](#), and your Corgi is more likely to have this condition than other dogs. Fortunately, these tissue bits usually don't hurt or impede vision, but can occasionally cause secondary problems.



Kidney Disease

Glomerulonephropathy is an inherited disease that slowly damages your Pembroke Welsh Corgi's kidneys, causing them to fail, often at an early age. Because damaged kidneys leak protein, we may be able to diagnose this disease by annually testing your pet's urine for excessive protein. Early detection leads to a happier pet and an easier, more affordable treatment plan. We may also recommend a special diet as part of his therapy.

Bladder or Kidney Stones

There are a few different types of stones that can form in the kidney or in the bladder, and Corgis are more likely to develop them than other breeds. We'll periodically test his urine for telltale signs indicating the presence of kidney and bladder stones, which in addition are very painful! If your buddy has blood in his urine, can't urinate, or is straining to urinate, it is a medical emergency. Call us immediately!

Liver Problems

Your Corgi is more likely than other dogs to have a liver disorder called **portosystemic shunt (PSS)**. Some of the blood supply that should go to the liver goes around it instead, depriving the liver of the blood flow it needs to grow and function properly. If your friend has PSS, his liver cannot remove toxins from his bloodstream effectively. To check for this problem, we'll conduct a liver function test in addition to a standard pre-anesthetic panel every time he undergoes anesthesia. If he develops symptoms such as stunted growth or seizures, we'll test his blood and possibly conduct an ultrasound scan of his liver. Surgery may be needed, but in some cases, we can treat with a special diet and medication.

Epilepsy

There are three types of **seizures** in dogs: reactive, secondary, and primary. Reactive seizures are caused by the brain's reaction to a metabolic problem like low blood sugar, organ failure, or a toxin. Secondary seizures are the result of a brain tumor, stroke, or trauma. If no other cause can be found, the disease is called primary or idiopathic epilepsy. This problem is often an inherited condition, and Pembroke Welsh Corgis are

commonly afflicted. If your friend is prone to seizures, episodes will usually begin between six months and three years of age. An initial diagnostic workup may help find the cause. Lifelong medication is usually necessary to help keep seizures under control with periodic blood testing required to monitor side effects and efficacy. If your dog has a seizure, carefully prevent him from injuring himself, but don't try to control his mouth or tongue. It won't help him, and he may bite you accidentally! Note the length of the seizure, and call us or an emergency hospital.

Lymphoma

Lymphoma or lymphosarcoma is a type of cancer that afflicts Pembroke Welsh Corgis more than other breeds. This disease makes the body form abnormal lymphocytes, which are a type of white blood cell. Because white blood cells can be found throughout the body, this cancer can show up almost anywhere. Lymphoma is a very treatable form of cancer with an excellent success rate in dogs receiving chemotherapy. Luckily, lymphoma is one of the few types of cancer that can often be found with a blood test, so we may recommend a complete blood count twice yearly. Watch for swollen glands (ask us, we'll show you where to look), weight loss, or labored breathing at home and be sure to call us if you notice any unusual symptoms.

Hernia

An umbilical hernia is a hole or defect in the body wall in the area of the umbilicus, or bellybutton. Usually it is seen as a soft bulging in the center of the belly caused by abdominal fat and sometimes intestines protruding through the hole. Considered the most common type of hernia in dogs, it is usually inherited, and your Pembroke Welsh Corgi is at greater than normal risk for this problem. In most cases, the abdominal bulge can be easily pushed back into place with gentle massage, but occasionally the intestines can become stuck in the hernia and require immediate veterinary attention. We'll check your baby for this congenital defect at his first exam and discuss treatment options at that time if needed.

Dermatomyositis

Dermatomyositis is an inflammatory condition of the skin and muscles seen in young Pembroke Welsh Corgis. It appears to be caused by a defect in the immune system passed genetically as an autosomal dominant trait, meaning that if one parent is affected, all the puppies will be susceptible to the disorder, but some may be affected more than others. Medications can help alleviate symptoms, but affected dogs should not be used for breeding.

Dental Abnormalities

Teeth abnormalities are often genetically induced and are relatively common in dogs, especially in purebred dogs like your Corgi. An overbite or underbite is called a malocclusion or a bad bite. Oligodontia is a condition where only a few teeth are present. Misaligned teeth can also occur and cause lots of problems, but can usually be corrected with braces or extractions. (Yes, dogs can get braces!) We want to keep your buddy's teeth healthy, so we will be watching his developing teeth closely. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific dental disorders your pet may encounter.

Reproductive Difficulties

Breeds with a large head and small pelvis are more prone to difficulties during the birthing process. The female's pelvis may be too small to pass the puppies' heads and a C-section is often required for her health and that of her puppies. If you are interested in breeding your Corgi, speak with us first. We can help you make an informed decision based on the body conformations of both sire and dam.

Retained Testicle

Some male Pembrokes have a condition present at birth in which one or both testicles do not descend into the scrotum (a condition called [cryptorchidism](#)). Instead, the testicle stays in the abdomen, which can cause problems later in life, including a high risk of cancer. We'll check for this problem when your pet is a puppy; we recommend removal of both testicles if he has this condition.

Taking Care of Your Pembroke Welsh Corgi at Home

Much of what you can do to keep your dog happy and healthy is common sense, just like it is for people. Watch her diet, make sure she gets plenty of exercise, regularly brush her teeth and coat, and call us or a pet emergency hospital when something seems unusual (see "What to Watch For" below). Be sure to adhere to the schedule of examinations and vaccinations that we recommend for her. This is when we'll give her the necessary "check-ups" and test for diseases and conditions that are common in Pembrokes. Another very important step in caring for your pet is signing up for pet health insurance. There will certainly be medical tests and procedures she will need throughout her life and pet health insurance will help you cover those costs.

Routine Care, Diet, and Exercise

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your Corgi live longer, stay healthier, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine.

- ✓ Supervise your pet as you would a toddler. Keep doors closed, pick up after yourself, and block off rooms as necessary. This will keep her out of trouble and away from objects she shouldn't put in her mouth.
- ✓ She needs a thorough brushing at least weekly most of the year. Twice a year she blows her coat and loses crazy amounts of hair; daily brushing is recommended during this time.
- ✓ Pembroke Welsh Corgis generally have good teeth, and you can keep them perfect by brushing them at least twice a week!
- ✓ Clean her ears weekly, even as a puppy. Don't worry—we'll show you how!
- ✓ She's a smart dog with lots of energy, so keep her mind and body active, or she'll get bored. That's when the naughty stuff starts.

- ✓ She is well suited to apartment life as long as she is given daily walks.
- ✓ She has short legs and a long back so be careful how you pick her up and don't let her jump down from furniture.
- ✓ Keep your dog's diet consistent and don't give her people food.
- ✓ Feed a high-quality diet appropriate for her age.
- ✓ Exercise your dog regularly, but don't overdo it at first.

What to Watch For

Any abnormal symptom could be a sign of serious disease or it could just be a minor or temporary problem. The important thing is to be able to tell when to seek veterinary help and how urgently. Many diseases cause dogs to have a characteristic combination of symptoms, which together can be a clear signal that your Pembroke Welsh Corgi needs help.

Office calls

Give us a call for an appointment if you notice any of these types of signs:

- ✓ Change in appetite or water consumption
- ✓ Tartar build-up, bad breath, red gums, or broken teeth
- ✓ Itchy skin (scratching, chewing, or licking); hair loss
- ✓ Lethargy, mental dullness, or excessive sleeping
- ✓ Fearfulness, aggression, or other behavioral changes
- ✓ Lumps or bumps – regardless of size
- ✓ Slow or stunted growth; sometimes seizes after eating
- ✓ Swollen lymph nodes or glands, unexplained weight loss

Emergencies

Seek medical care immediately if you notice any of these types of signs:

- ✓ Scratching or shaking the head, tender ears, or ear discharge
- ✓ Inability or straining to urinate; discolored urine
- ✓ Cloudiness, redness, itching, or any other abnormality involving the eyes
- ✓ Fatigue during exercise, coughing, or shortness of breath



- ✓ Unwilling to jump, pain, hunched back, paralysis
- ✓ Leg stiffness; reluctance to rise, sit, use stairs, run, or jump; “bunny hopping”
- ✓ Dragging the hind toes or hind limb weakness
- ✓ Any abnormal shaking, trembling, or excessive involuntary tremors

Genetic/DNA Testing

DNA analysis is a rapidly advancing field in healthcare for people and pets. Luckily, technologies exist to screen for hundreds of inherited diseases in pets, just like in people. By screening each pet for as many genetic diseases as possible, we will be better prepared to care for your pet throughout life. This is an important step in caring for your pet because it's always better to know your pal is at risk for a genetic disease before the problem is untreatable.

In an effort to screen for as many genetically linked diseases as possible, we may recommend the **Embark Health Genetic Screen** to screen for more than 150 genetic mutations that cause disease.

Each **Embark Health Genetic Screen** Screens for

- ✓ Over 30 Musculoskeletal Problems
- ✓ Over 30 Metabolic Conditions
- ✓ Over 30 Eye Conditions
- ✓ Over 25 Blood and Clotting Disorders
- ✓ Over 10 Immune System Diseases
- ✓ Over 10 Urinary Tract Problems
- ✓ 10 Skin and Hair Conditions
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Dental Disease
- ✓ Drug Metabolism
- ✓ Heart Problems
- ✓ Hormonal Conditions
- ✓ Liver/Gastrointestinal Diseases
- ✓ Midline Defect
- ✓ Neuromuscular Diseases
- ✓ Reproduction Problems
- ✓ Respiratory Conditions

This one-time test is one of the best decisions you can make for your Corgi's medical care. With less than a few drops of blood, we'll have a lifetime of information to assist us in providing the very best care of your friend's unique and individual needs throughout her life!

For more information about genetic testing, visit <http://embarkvet.com>

Your Pembroke counts on you to take good care of her, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that she lives a long and healthy life. Our goal is to provide the best health care possible: health care that's based on her breed, lifestyle, and age. Please contact us when you have questions or concerns:

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Puppy to Adolescent Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Welsh Pembroke Corgi Healthy		Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years			
(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Corgi-Specific Problems We're Looking For		
○	6–9 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Dental alignment, heart murmur, hernia Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, Distichiasis, and Persistent Pupillary Membranes Cleft lip and palate, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) and Portosystemic Shunt (PSS) von Willebrand's disease (vWD)		
○	10–13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, Distichiasis, and Persistent Pupillary Membranes Cleft lip and palate, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) and Portosystemic Shunt (PSS) von Willebrand's disease (vWD)		
○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, Distichiasis, and Persistent Pupillary Membranes Cleft lip and palate, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) and Portosystemic Shunt (PSS) von Willebrand's disease (vWD)		
○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Discuss microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, Distichiasis, and Persistent Pupillary Membranes Cleft lip and palate, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) and Portosystemic Shunt (PSS) Hip dysplasia and Elbow dysplasia von Willebrand's disease (vWD)		
○	6 months through 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, Distichiasis, and Persistent Pupillary Membranes Cleft lip and palate, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) and Portosystemic Shunt (PSS) Dermatomyositis Hip dysplasia and Elbow dysplasia Epilepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD) All major diseases important in the breed with diagnostic plan		

Adult to Golden Years Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Welsh Pembroke Corgi Healthy		(✓)			Corgi-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	Adult-Mature: 18 to 39 in People Years	○	1 years through 8 years	Services We'll Provide Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition Schedule spay/neuter after 1 year	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Retinal dysplasia Dermatomyositis Kidney disease (Glomerulonephropathy) and Urolithiasis Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Epilepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years	○	9 years through 10 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Retinal dysplasia Dermatomyositis Kidney disease (Glomerulonephropathy) and Urolithiasis Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Epilepsy Lymphoma
	Golden Years: 60+ in People Years	○	11+ years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Retinal dysplasia Dermatomyositis Kidney disease (Glomerulonephropathy) and Urolithiasis Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Epilepsy and Degenerative myelopathy Lymphoma

Note: We recommend twice-a-year examinations so that we may diagnose problems sooner. This approach also gives you the budget-friendly option of spreading preventive testing over two visits rather than one.