As a breed, the Sussex Spaniel is very low in numbers – only 34 puppies being born in 2018 in the United States, and 37 registered in the UK, 3 of which were imported.

The Sussex is a basically healthy breed, once the puppy passes the infant stage of about 2 weeks. Up until that time, the main problems health wise are regarding breeding and whelping, problems breeders have dealt with since the breed began.

At the present time, the following screenings are the only ones recommended by the Sussex Spaniel Club of America.

PDP1 testing:

Pyruvate dehydrogenase deficiency is a deficiency in the PDP1 Enzyme which regulates PDH. This can cause everything from profound exercise intolerance to sudden death. Dogs tested as “affected” should never be bred. Those tested as “carrier” should not be bred to each other and most breeders will not breed them at all. Those tested “clear” are safe to breed and do not carry the trait so cannot pass it on. This disease is a simple recessive trait and a DNA test is now available.

Cardiac abnormalities:

Heart problems can be inherited (genetic) or congenital (birth defects unrelated to genes.) They can be present at birth or develop as the dog ages. Auscultation should be done on a puppy at about 8 weeks of age. If a problem is detected, then advanced cardiac testing (Echocardiogram) should be done.

When considering the purchase of a Sussex Spaniel you should be sure to talk to the breeder about health screening they have done and any health issues that may have shown up over the years.

A health certificate from a licensed veterinarian should be given to every puppy buyer.