Open Letter To Aussie Owner: What To Do If Your Dog Has Seizures

*(This is not a dog from my breeding program)*

Original Email:

*Hi Nannette,*

*I wanted to let you know that our Aussie, Ollie (age 2 1/2), was tested for the MDR1 gene through WSU, and his results indicate that he is Normal/Normal. Since we spoke a few weeks ago, Ollie has had 2 seizures, about 1 week apart. He is being transitioned off of phenobarbitol onto the generic of Keppra. The transition will continue for 4 more weeks until he is completely off of phenobarbital. We omitted the September 1st doses of both NexGard and HeartGard by omitting the September 1st dose. Even so, he had a seizure on September 14th. Ollie now wears a Seresto flea and tick collar. We gave him a HeartGard dose on September 22nd in the morning and he had a seizure at 2 pm that day. We will not give him another dose for the foreseeable future. We have taken Ollie to Dr. XXXXXX at the XXXXXXX Holistic Veterinary Clinic, and she has been supportive, although there don’t seem to be any easy answers yet.*

*My Response:*

I am so sorry that Ollie has had seizures. Australian Shepherds and most of the herding breeds are sensitive to toxins and the common result is a seizure(s). Generally removing the toxin removes the reaction. I am pleased that you are seeking the advice of a holistic vet in this case. I think Ollie will benefit from that point of view, skill and knowledge. And I do hope that the answers to Ollie’s situation are easier to remedy than you currently believe.

Over the years I have counseled hundreds of owners of dogs who have seized worldwide and in 98% of the time, when the offending toxin is removed from the immediate environment or the dog’s system, the seizures have stopped and the dogs can live normal long and healthy lives. The mistake some vets make is in immediately giving anti-seizure medications and/or steroids. We have found empirical evidence that dogs that do not have idiopathic epilepsy do not respond to anti-seizure medications. The vet then recommends more and different kinds of anti-seizure medications, generally more and more expensive, that do not work over time. These dogs generally die of liver failure from the drugs, even though the drugs do NOT stop the seizures.

I have been actively working to extend the longevity and health of my own breeding program. When I first entered the breed in 1972, our dogs easily lived to be 14-16 years of age. Now 10-12 years seems average. This is unacceptable. In my own program over the past 10 years, I have extended the life of my own dogs. How did I do this?

1. I do not vaccinate annually. I follow a modified vaccine schedule (10, 14 and 18 weeks parvo and distemper ONLY). The vaccine given after 16 weeks of age is good for the life of the dog. I titer test each dog every 5 years to verify blood serum level immunity.

2. I do NOT use monthly heartworm medication. While this may sound out of line, I have studied the lifecycle of the heartworm and its host the mosquito. I have provided links below to a two-part article that covers this topic in depth. Basically heartworm preventative is NOT a preventative. It is a chemical that circulates in your dog’s internal system and works ONLY when your dog has been infected with heartworm in the larval state. The larval stage can last up to 6 months. So I keep a weather calendar handy. Heartworm carriers are dependent on specific weather temperatures. If we have any of these weather events I wait two months and then administer a blood test for heartworm. If the dog is infected (which has NOT happened in 10 years!) I merely administer one heartworm tablet.

Heartworm Article Part 1: <http://www.dogs4dogs.com/blog/2009/05/13/heartworm-medication-safety/>

Heartworm Article Part 2: <http://www.dogs4dogs.com/blog/2009/06/16/heartworm-preventative-options/>

3. I do not use topical flea and tick medications. The main ingredient in most is nothing more that tree and shrub insecticide you purchase at Home Depot. Iminicloprid. Read about it.

I have found that when I support and encourage my dog’s own natural immune system that they are able to handle fleas tick and worms on their own, as well as warding off typical events such as kennel cough.

4. If you are only feeding one dog, I highly recommend feeding a raw diet. The health benefits outweigh any additional cost and will help you avoid many future and costly veterinarian visits including teeth cleaning.

5. If you choose to remain on a kibble diet, look at supplementing with fresh fruits and vegetables suitable for dogs. I use blueberries and lightly steamed broccoli. I also use a dog-developed probiotic.

If you would like to talk to me more about this I have quite a bit of data I can share with you. Here are links to a 3-part article I wrote regarding environmental seizures.

<http://www.stonepine.net/pdfs/EnvironmentalSeizures1.pdf>

<http://www.stonepine.net/pdfs/EnvironmentalSeizures2.pdf>

<http://www.stonepine.net/pdfs/MedicationSeizures-part-3.pdf>

Also I would encourage you to Google “adverse reactions to Seresto flea collars.” You can make your own decision, but I do not and would not use them on my dogs. One of the more common reactions is seizures. There are other newly developed natural flea collars with no toxins available.

The MDR1 gene test only tests for PROTEINS that pass the blood brain barrier. What we as breeders of herding breeds worldwide have discovered (thank goodness for the internet) is that there are many other drugs that will cause seizures in our breeds. I have compiled a list of these known drugs. This is a combination of the MDR1 researchers list of protein based substances AND empirical evidence from breeders in the UK and the US. Here is the link. Please refer to the *Do Not Use Drug* List article.

<http://www.stonepine.net/pdfs/Do%20Not%20Use%20List%20REVISED.pdf>

NOTE: After trying to reverse the adverse effects of the chemical assault that Ollie had suffered, he was humanely euthanized due to severe cluster seizures. I believe that Ollie’s condition was preventable and that you must choose to be an advocate for your dog’s health and longevity.