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[Am J Vet Res.](#) 2012 Jun;73(6):838-46. doi: 10.2460/ajvr.73.6.838.

Housing- and exercise-related risk factors associated with the development of hip dysplasia as determined by radiographic evaluation in a prospective cohort of Newfoundlands, Labrador Retrievers, Leonbergers, and Irish Wolfhounds in Norway

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PMID: 22620698 DOI: [10.2460/ajvr.73.6.838](#)

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Abstract

Objective: To identify housing- and exercise-related risk factors associated with the development of hip dysplasia (HD) as determined by radiographic evaluation in Newfoundlands, Labrador Retrievers, Leonbergers, and Irish Wolfhounds in Norway.

Animals: 501 client-owned dogs from 103 litters.

Procedures: Dogs were assessed from birth until official radiographic screening for HD at 12 (Labrador Retriever [n = 133] and Irish Wolfhound [63]) or 18 (Newfoundland [125] and Leonberger [180]) months of age. Information regarding housing and exercise conditions during the preweaning and postweaning periods was obtained with questionnaires. Multivariable random effects logistic regression models were used to identify housing- and exercise-related risk factors associated with the development of radiographically detectable HD.

Results: Puppies walking on stairs from birth to 3 months of age had an increased risk of developing HD. Factors associated with a decreased risk of developing HD included off-leash exercise from birth to 3 months of age, birth during the spring and summer, and birth on a farm. Significant clustering of dogs with HD was detected within litters.

Conclusions and clinical relevance: Results indicated that puppies \leq 3 months old should not be allowed access to stairs, but should be allowed outdoor exercise on soft ground in moderately rough terrain to decrease the risk for developing radiographically detectable HD. These findings could be used as practical recommendations for the prevention of HD in Newfoundlands, Labrador Retrievers, Leonbergers, and Irish Wolfhounds.

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