

Leonberger life expectancy & health

The Leonberger (affectionately known as the Leo) is a striking breed, sought after for its gentle temperament and massive yet cuddly proportions.

Named after the German city Leonberg from where the breed originated, the Leo is unique because despite its size, it was bred first and foremost to be a companion dog. The result is a giant, gentle companion with a striking coat and a loving nature.

While the Leonberger is a great choice for a family looking for an overgrown teddy bear of a dog, **Leonberger health problems** can be considerable and from the outset, potential owners should understand that **Leonberger health issues** may require close management throughout their life.

In this article we'll look at **Leonberger life expectancy** and the health issues associated with these gentle giants

Leonberger life expectancy

The Leonberger is an extremely large dog. The male stands between 28 and 31 inches and the female's height ranges from 26 to 29 inches.

That impressive height is matched by their considerable bulk! Typically the male Leonberger may weigh from 110 to 170 pounds and the female will weight around 90 to 140 pounds.

Unfortunately, as with all large dogs, their size means a shorter lifespan. The average lifespan of the Leonberger is around 7 years.

For more information about the unique features of the Leonberger, you can check out our guide, [here](#).

Leonberger health problems

Bone and joint issues

Hip dysplasia and elbow dysplasia are genetically inherited conditions affecting the health and mobility of the joints. These conditions are very common among large dogs, and the Leonberger is no exception, experiencing [a significantly higher than average incidence](#).

[There is some evidence](#) that houses with stairs create extra risk of bone and joint problems, so a house without stairs is probably better suited for this breed. Plenty of exercise on soft ground has also been found to be beneficial in preventing the onset of dysplasia.

[Osteochondritis dissecans](#) is another relatively common [Leonberger health issue](#). A cartilage abnormality affecting the limbs, this condition causes lameness and swelling and can often make it very difficult for a Leonberger [to remain active](#).

[Panosteitis](#) is another bone issue affecting [Leonberger health](#). Typically affecting younger dogs, this is a painful inflammation of the bones causing sudden lameness which shifts across the legs. Fortunately, this problem [frequently resolves itself](#) as the dog matures.

While these problems can be debilitating and can even affect [Leonberger lifespan](#), they can be screened for early in your pup's life and effective treatment and preventive measures can usually be taken.

Gastric issues

Bloat (also known as [gastric torsion](#)) is another [Leonberger health issue](#) to look out for. This is a potentially deadly condition in which the stomach dilates and then rotates within the body.

Symptoms include drooling an enlarged abdomen and retching. When these occur it's important to get to your vet as soon as possible.

[Studies also suggest](#) that diarrhea and vomiting are quite common in Leonberger pups. A healthy diet is your best bet to ensure gastric [Leonberger health problems](#) are kept to a minimum.

Eye issues

A [statistically high number](#) of Leos suffer from cataracts, a progressive opacity in the lens of the eye. Cataracts tend to worsen with age and are exacerbated with exposure to UV light.

While not a significant problem for [Leonberger life expectancy](#) of itself, cataracts can significantly reduce quality of life, causing drastically reduced vision. Fortunately, it's a condition which can be both screened for and effectively treated.

Other ophthalmic [Leonberger health issues](#) to be mindful of include entropion (inward curling of the eyelids) and ectropion (outwardly droopy eyelids). These conditions have a range of associated [health challenges](#), including chronic eye irritation, infections and dry eye.

Because eye issues can be such a challenge when it comes to Leonberger health and well-being, an early ophthalmic evaluation is essential.

Other conditions

[Polyneuropathy](#) is an inherited nerve condition to which [Leonberger's are susceptible](#). This condition affects gait, ability to exercise, muscle strength and the proper function of sight, sound and smell.

[Leukoencephalomyelopathy](#) is a related nerve condition affecting the spinal cord which causes an inability to walk and spinal reflex problems.

A DNA test can test for both these nerve conditions.

[Thyroid dysfunction](#) is also another common factor in [Leonberger health](#), frequently leading to Addison's disease, a condition which causes lethargy, appetite loss, shaking and a variety of digestion and hydration issues.

An [early thyroid evaluation](#) can lead to the prevention of a range of life-threatening complications.

Finding a Leonberger puppy

[Leonberger health issues](#) are numerous, but many of these conditions are inherited.

For this reason, an important step in finding a Leonberger puppy is to go with a breeder you can trust. A reputable breeder will be able to give you a wealth of information about the parents.

They should also be able to produce certificates which demonstrate their dogs have had all the appropriate screening.

For both parents, these screening tests should include an ophthalmic evaluation, a DNA test for polyneuropathy and Leukoencephalomyelopathy, a hip and elbow evaluation and information about the general condition of the parents.

Ideally, you should ask to see the parents for yourself so that you can get a good sense of their general health and well-being.

If these tests haven't been performed, you can always request they be completed before making a decision about whether the breeder's Leonberger pups are right for you.

Leonbergers are beautiful, loving and active dogs. However, their massiveness means that [Leonberger life expectancy](#) is not long and they are susceptible to a range of health issues. It's important to be aware of this before making a decision.

Choosing a healthy Leonberger puppy is much easier if you go through a well-respected breeder who understands [Leonberger health issues](#), and who can show you the papers of both parents.

Sources

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