

# Congenital Radial Head Luxation/CHRL

(Also known as Forelimb Anomaly)

## What is it?

A congenital orthopedic condition causing severely bowed front limbs that appear almost dwarfed. The hind limbs are not affected. It can be bilateral or unilateral and varies in severity. It has been diagnosed in Newfoundlands worldwide. Although seen at a higher rate in Newfs, it can affect many breeds including Bernese Mountain Dogs, Tibetan Mastiffs, Akitas, Chows, Bouviers, and Tollers.



## What causes it?

Genetic basis is very likely, environmental influence cannot be ruled out as a contributing factor. The mode of inheritance is complex; there is no way for a breeder to predict or prevent occurrence in a litter.

## Signs & Symptoms

Can be suspected as early as 5 weeks of age and is usually visually apparent by 8 weeks of age. Some cases may take even longer to “appear”. Puppies have difficulty bending their elbows, so they use the shoulder to “stand up”, causing difficulty getting around. Dogs that are affected on both forelimbs rarely limp as both legs are bad.

## Prognosis:

Very severe puppies are generally euthanized by the breeder. This is a very humane (albeit difficult) thing to do. Severely affected puppies can be in debilitating pain and have a very poor quality of life.

## Breeding implications/genetics:

A genetic basis is suspected. The mode of inheritance is complex; there is no way for a breeder to predict or prevent occurrence in a litter.

## More Information:

<https://newfdoghealth.org/fla.html>    email: [forelimbanomaly@ncacharities.org](mailto:forelimbanomaly@ncacharities.org)

## Testing & Treatment

### How is it diagnosed?

The forelimb deformity and bowing caused by FLA/CRHL can be mistaken for other diseases; for accurate diagnosis, x-rays must be taken and correctly interpreted. Flexed lateral and AP views are standard. Your vet may not have extensive knowledge of the disease and you may be referred to a specialist.

### How is it treated?

Very early surgical intervention can be helpful, but isn't always successful; repeat surgery is not uncommon. Medical management consists of weight control, pain medication as necessary, and modified exercise. Severe cases develop arthritis earlier, but some arthritis will develop eventually in all affected dogs.

*This information is not meant to be a substitute for veterinary care.*

*Always follow the instructions provided by your veterinarian.*

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