

## Breed Defect - Staffordshire Bull Terrier - Short Toes



Notice anything peculiar about the photo above? It's the right front paw of a Staffordshire Bull Terrier and if you look at the nail of the far right toe you'll notice that it's back too far compared to the other toes? Have a look at the photo of a perfect foot below for comparison.



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2 pictures of the problem on another dog the photo at bottom shows the dog standing for a better perspective. In the bottom photo the toe does not even go close to touching the ground.



## **Staffordshire Bull Terrier - Short Toes**

This defect is called Brachydactylia and occurs relatively frequently in Staffordshire Bull Terriers! It is genetic - however not all offspring are always affected. It is more likely if both parents have the defective gene - but even then is a bit like a lottery in that the number of affected pups is unpredictable.

The short toes shown in the first photo are of our pedigreed red bitch—our first Stafford (who we love to bits) and before we became more familiar with the breed and breeding and what to look for.

We did breed from her and from 2 litters of 7 pups; only 1 was affected, but was stillborn. Once you know what to look for; the short toed pup can be spotted as early as birth, and becomes more noticeable the older the dog becomes.

She was sold to us by a registered breeder, who had been recommended by a Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club —so quite obviously buyers need to beware?

In our 5 years of breeding we have come across at least 4 instances of the short toe defect and this from just one Australian state!

### **How does Short Toes Affect You or Your Dog?**

Short toes is more of an aesthetic problem than anything else. Our bitch has an unusual gait, due to her toes, wide chest and muscular build; but we would not swap her for anything.

It is not described as a fault for the breed in the standard—however the defect IS instantly recognizable by judges—and dogs with short toes do not fare anywhere near as well in the show ring.

We absolutely love Staffordshire's — so the thought of any dog being passed over because of its toes, causes us concern. If you are looking for a Staffordshire as a pet and companion only it is not likely to be a problem. However, if you are planning to show your dog in the ring you would do well to consider a dog that does not have the fault.

To the best of our knowledge —there is no other information available on this topic; it is our hope that this article may help to increase awareness of the problem and perhaps lead to more concerted efforts to eliminate it from the breed.

**Steve Gaskin**