



Hip Dysplasia

General Information

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Hip dysplasia is a condition in which abnormal formation results in an unstable hip joint. As the affected dog ages, the hips gradually become arthritic and may degenerate to cause total crippling of the rear limbs.

The exact cause is unknown, but it is believed to develop because the skeleton grows faster than the supporting muscles. Heredity and diet influence the imbalanced growth rate. Other unknown factors may influence the development and severity of hip dysplasia.

Not all dogs with hip dysplasia are affected to the same degree. The disease can be very mild and cause no signs at all, or it may be severe and crippling of the rear limbs. While the disease usually affects both hips, occasionally it only affects one side. Hindleg lameness, a swaying or staggering gait, "bunny-hopping" while running, discomfort on rising, reluctance to climb stairs or stand on the rear legs, and reluctance to run or jump are all signs of hip dysplasia. Though this disease is most common in large breeds of dogs, it may occur in any breed. All large breed dogs that are to be bred should be certified as "hip dysplasia-free" by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals" (OFA-certified). Insist on puppies only from OFA-certified parents (both mother and father).

Important Points in Treatment

Treatment varies from simply restricting exercise to daily anti-inflammatory medications to surgery, depending on the severity of the condition. Proper treatment often allows affected pets to live reasonably normal lives. The doctor will discuss the prognosis (medical forecast) for your pet.

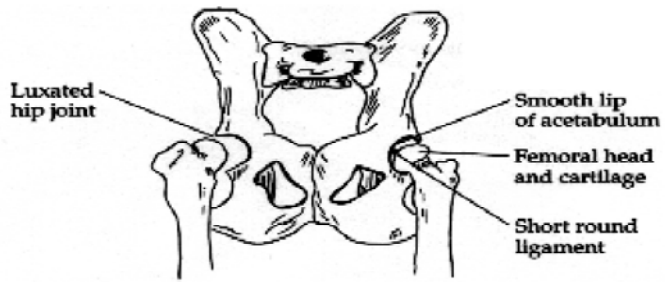
Dogs with hip dysplasia should *not* be bred.

All breeds predisposed to developing hip dysplasia should be fed a special diet restricted in protein and calcium. We recommend Science Diet Large Breeds Growth. Diet may play a more important role in the development of hip dysplasia than genetics. Contact our hospital for specific recommendations for your pet.

Notify the Doctor if any of the Following Occur:

- Your pet shows increasing discomfort or lameness in the rear legs.
- Your pet develops weakness or lameness in the hind legs.
- Your pet has vomiting, increased urination, or increased water intake after beginning medication such as an NSAID.

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