



Hip Dysplasia

Diagnostic Plan

History
Physical examination
Palpation of the hips
X-rays of the hips

Therapeutic Plan

Enforced rest
Mild analgesics
Anti-inflammatory drugs
Surgery
Physical therapy

Nutritional Plan

Postsurgically, nutrition adequate for tissue repair
If obesity is a complicating factor, restrict caloric intake so the patient reaches and maintains an ideal body weight

Hip Dysplasia

Your pet has hip dysplasia. Hip dysplasia is a developmental disease of the hip joint seen in most breeds of dogs and in some cats. Lameness and exercise intolerance are the most common clinical signs. Hip dysplasia is treated with rest, restricted activity, pain medication, and, in severe cases, surgery. This client education sheet will help you learn more about hip dysplasia and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

What You Should Know About Hip Dysplasia

The hip joint is formed from the pelvis, which serves as a socket, and the top of the femur (thighbone), which has a rounded end that fits into the socket. Cartilage lines the surfaces of the bones that make up the socket. Membranes called a capsule surround the joint and contain fluid that lubricates the joint surfaces. In normal dogs and cats, the head (top) of the femur fits snugly within the socket on the pelvis.

Dogs and cats with hip dysplasia develop changes in the joint shape and consequently hip function. In younger patients, hip dysplasia is seen as a dislocation or partial dislocation of the head of the femur. Dislocation produces joint laxity and stretches the joint capsule, causing pain and lameness. Tiny fractures of the pelvis also contribute to this syndrome. In older pets (about two years old and older) the changes include cartilage erosion in the joints, flattening of the femoral head and arthritis.

Causes

The causes of hip dysplasia are complex and involve hereditary and environmental factors such as overeating and rapid weight gain.

Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will confirm the diagnosis by palpating (examining by touch) the hip joints and taking X-rays.

Treatment and Home Care

Treatment for hip dysplasia is based on the age and size of the patient, the degree of pain, physical examination, X-ray findings and your expectations for how active your pet should be. Conservative treatment benefits many patients when they experience signs of hip dysplasia. This treatment includes enforced rest, anti-inflammatory drugs and pain medication. Once the clinical signs are controlled, the therapy includes weight reduction if needed and an exercise program designed to improve the strength of your pet's rear legs. Such an exercise program might include swimming and walking uphill.

Surgery may be performed to lessen the signs in some pets. Surgical procedures reorient the bones making up the hip joint, or in some cases remove the affected bones that cause the problem (e.g. total hip joint replacement). Because animals with hip dysplasia should not be bred, your veterinarian may recommend castration or ovariectomy.

(spaying) for your pet. Home care consists of carefully following your veterinarian's instructions for giving medications, enforcing rest and exercising your pet when the signs disappear. If your pet has had surgery, you will need to check the incision at least once a day for swelling, discharges and missing sutures. If any of these occur, or if you pet loses its appetite, see your veterinarian at once.

Nutritional Plan

If your pet has hip dysplasia, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions based on your pet's age (young vs. middle-aged to older) and body condition (overweight). If your pet is a young adult your veterinarian may recommend a pet food that supplies nutrients for proper development and tissue repair. Optimal nutrition should also reduce the health risks associated with feeding excess nutrients such as calcium and phosphorus, which could cause skeletal problems, and excess calories, which could lead to obesity and complicate signs of hip dysplasia. Foods that help manage the nutritional risks of hip dysplasia by avoiding excess levels of harmful nutrients include Hill's® Science Diet® brand pet foods.

If your pet is overweight, your veterinarian may recommend a special food to help return your pet to its optimal weight, which helps reduce stress on the hip joints and helps prevent the progression of arthritis. The best food for reducing weight is a nutritionally complete and balanced high-fiber, low-fat and low-calorie pet food, such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® r/d® Canine and r/d® Feline Weight Loss-Low Calorie. Alternately, your veterinarian may recommend a high-protein, low-carbohydrate food that will alter your cat's metabolism for effective weight loss. Such foods include Prescription Diet® m/d® Feline Weight Loss-Low Carbohydrate-Diabetic. Once your pet's weight returns to normal, your veterinarian may recommend a reduced-calorie, increased-fiber food to help manage the long-term risks of excess weight gain. Such foods include Prescription Diet® w/d® Canine and w/d® Feline Low Fat-Diabetic-Gastrointestinal.

Dogs with hip dysplasia can benefit from a diet formulated to help a dog with joint issues. Dietary therapy for dogs with hip dysplasia includes a diet that will help dogs run better, play better and rise more easily while maintaining optimal body weight. A joint diet will have added EPA (eicosapentanoic acid) an omega-3 fatty acid that has been shown to help maintain joint function, enhanced levels of glucosamine and chondroitin to provide the building blocks of healthy cartilage and L-carnitine to maintain optimal weight. Such foods include Prescription Diet® j/d® Canine Mobility.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.