

Hip Dysplasia

Owner information sheet





Hip dysplasia is defined as an abnormality in development of the hip joint. The hip joints are ‘ball and socket’ joints and act to allow movement of both hind limbs, when the joints do not fit together properly, this is called hip dysplasia. Dogs will usually develop hip dysplasia over the first few weeks, usually both hips are affected. Dogs with hip dysplasia will develop arthritis over time.

The causes of hip dysplasia lie at a genetic level and will most commonly affect rapidly growing large breed dogs, but all dogs and some cats can be affected. Obesity during the puppy stage can also be a risk factor in developing the condition. Clinical signs can be variable and age of onset of clinical signs can also vary widely.

The most common signs of hip dysplasia include:

- Stiffness
- Exercise Intolerance
- Lameness of one or both hindlimbs
- Altered hindlimb gait; particularly “bunny hopping” both back legs together
- Difficulty rising or climbing stairs/jumping
- Pain in some animals
- Muscle loss on affected limbs

Clinical signs are variable and can be quite subtle in some cases. Not all animals will be in pain, but most animals will experience some clinical signs and could be in discomfort, therefore they will require evaluation by a veterinary surgeon.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY RESCUE ANIMAL AND ME?

Your pet has been diagnosed with hip dysplasia by our team of vets through evaluation of gait, joints and x-rays. It is highly likely that arthritis will develop in the affected joints later in life and this may require medical, nutritional and behavioural management between you and your veterinary surgeon. There are many management modalities available for hip dysplasia, for example hydrotherapy, acupuncture and joint supplements, and these can be implemented at your veterinary surgeon’s discretion, in addition to possible medication for pain relief.

If you decide to take out a pet insurance policy, you will find that there will be exclusions relating to the diagnosis made. We advise you to seek clarification with different insurance providers before choosing a policy.