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depends on many factors. In severe cases a total hip replacement is possible. Not all dogs are candidates for surgery but many can be given a greatly improved length and quality of life with surgery. A referral for assessment by a specialist orthopaedic surgeon is almost always required unless the simpler procedure of femoral head osteotomy is elected. It is important to remember that surgery is aimed at relieving pain and increasing mobility in affected dogs.

## **detection and scoring of HD**

*X Rays of your dog's hips under general anaesthetic can be carried out at this hospital. These X Rays are able to be referred to a specialist radiographer for a hip score if required. The higher the score the worse the hips.*

*Dogs must usually be older than 6 months of age for*

*X rays to be diagnostic.*

*This is a day procedure with admission in the morning and discharge late afternoon.*

### **Client information series**

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# hip dysplasia

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# hip dysplasia

Hip Dysplasia is a deformity of the hip joint. It is caused by a variety of factors including genetic factors, obesity as a young pup and over-exercise.

As the dog walks on the abnormal joint, arthritis and joint pain develop.

Most breeds of dog may be affected by hip dysplasia although it is predominantly a disease of large to giant breeds, notably the German Shepherd, Golden Retriever, Rottweiler, Mastiff and St Bernard.

**Clinical Signs:** Typical signs are weakness and pain in the hind legs, lack of coordination and reluctance to rise. Limping after exercise or reluctance

to exercise may also be noticed.

Signs can occur as early as 4-6 weeks of age, but most dogs manifest the disease as a lameness at around 1-2 years of age.

**Diagnosis:** is made on the basis of history, breed and clinical signs. It is necessary to confirm the diagnosis and assess the severity of the problem with x rays. Because of the need for accurate positioning for these x rays, a general anaesthetic is almost always required.

## **Treatment:**

### 1) Anti-inflammatory Drugs.

Drugs which allow regeneration of the cartilage joint lining are frequently used to help stabilise the joints and relieve pain. Cartrophen is the primary drug in this category, given as a course of weekly injections. There are food supplements containing products like Glucosamine and Chondroitin. Vitamin C and some homeopathic remedies are also available. Many but not

all dogs will respond well to this type of medication and be stable and pain free for months.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories are also widely used to help reduce the discomfort associated with this condition. This is usually a tablet or liquid formulation given at home at a maintenance dose on a constant basis. Rimadyl, Ketofen and Metacam are all well recognised products in this group.

Occasionally corticosteroids are required in treatment. All medications may have side effects and the age and general health of the dog play a big part in deciding which medication may be most suitable.

### 2) Surgery.

There are 4 main surgical procedures used in the treatment of Hip Dysplasia and the type of surgery selected de-