HIP DYSPLASIA
FACT SHEET

NAME

WEIGHT

DATE

NEXT VISIT

DESCRIPTION

Hip dysplasia is an inherited disease, the severity of which is affected by factors such as body condition and exercise. It consists of the malformation of the hip joint in the first few months of life.

Progression of hip dysplasia leads to degeneration of the joint – which is known as osteoarthritis – and reduced mobility.

NORMAL HIP

- The socket of the hip joint has developed normally and is properly positioned. No deformities are present.
- The contact surfaces (of ball and socket) are aligned and there is no shifting of muscles, ligaments or joint capsule.
- The cartilage is healthy and smooth without defects.
- The normal joint structure facilitates normal joint function without clinical signs of pain.

HIP DYSPLASIA

- In cases of hip dysplasia, the head of the femur (ball) is flattened and the hip socket is shallow. This leads to the loosening of the hip joint (laxity), which results in ongoing deformation of the ball and socket.
- Causes abnormal joint movement, inflammation and even dislocation.
- Osteoarthritis occurs as a result of hip laxity and ongoing inflammation.

HIP DYSPLASIA

CLINICAL SIGNS

- Reluctance or inability to walk, climb stairs, jump or stand for an extended period.
- Spinal sway walk, bunny-hopping to trot or climb stairs, or a hindlimb limp.
- Difficulty getting up or lying down.
- Pain and stiffness in the hindlimbs, which are often kept close together.
- Wasting of gluteal (buttock) muscles.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Non-surgical management

- **Weight control** is vital as allowing the dog to become overweight will accelerate the onset and progression of osteoarthritis.
- **Anti-inflammatory drugs** are used to reduce pain and inflammation in the joint, thereby improving the dog's quality of life.
- **Dietary supplements** may be added for different purposes. Glucosamine with chondroitin sulphate supports the joint cartilage. Omega-3 fatty acids are used for their anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Physiotherapy** uses a customised exercise program to improve the dog's clinical signs.

Surgical intervention

- **Pelvic osteotomy:** Surgical modification of the existing hip joint so that the head of the femur (ball) sits deeper in the hip socket.
- **Femoral head and neck excision:** A surgical procedure that aims to restore pain-free mobility by removing the head and neck of the femur (thigh bone).
- **Total hip replacement:** For dogs with osteoarthritis that are not responding adequately to medical management. This involves replacing the joint with a prosthesis.

TIPS FOR THE OWNER

- Daily physiotherapy, including gentle, short exercises – as directed by your veterinarian – is beneficial for your dog as it will improve the mobility of the affected limb.
- Keeping your dog's weight under control with an appropriate high-quality diet and calorie restriction is essential to maintaining their joint health and general well-being.
- You can help your dog by using a harness that provides them with support and assistance on walks.
- Environmental modifications, such as a comfortable bed to sleep on, a mat on slippery floors and a ramp or steps to get into the car, will make daily activities easier for your dog.
- Don't forget to use medical treatment to reduce pain and inflammation, and to improve your dog's quality of life.

Please consult with your veterinarian for confirmation of any diagnosis or treatment.