

## **Elbow Dysplasia**

Elbow dysplasia in dogs is a genetic condition that generally affects younger pets. In cases of elbow dysplasia, the joint fails to develop properly, leading to misalignment and uneven fitting together of the parts of the joint. The condition generally leads to early wear and tear at a minimum, with more severe cases causing fragmentation of bone or cartilage leading to discomfort and early onset arthritis.

### *Symptoms*

Breeds that are especially at risk for elbow dysplasia include larger breeds like Retrievers and Rottweilers. The age of onset for symptoms is generally during their main growth phase at 4-9 months of age.

Signs of elbow dysplasia include:

- Lameness in the front legs
- Swollen elbows

### *Diagnosis*

Physical examination of your pet will allow us to identify the cause of lameness, while x-rays tell us whether there are any bone fragments present in the joint or signs of arthritis. We may also request to run a CT scan, especially if your pet may still be in the early stages of elbow disease.

### *Treatment*

Elbow dysplasia may be treated with surgical interventions, though the goal can vary depending on the state of the disease. If the condition is caught early on before more severe arthritis has set in, arthroscopic exploration of the joint can allow us to remove fragments for more comfortable movement. If more severe deformity of the bone and joint has already occurred, we may need to cut and repair the ulna using steel pins and wire. The success rates for each of these is relatively high, though some lameness may remain.

### *Elbow Dysplasia in Older Pets*

Occasionally, pets may not show signs of elbow dysplasia until much later in life. They may become suddenly lame, have significantly strained elbows and can even have infections of the joint. These pets often have advanced arthritis as well. In these situations we generally treat with medical interventions, such as pain relievers, physical therapy and acupuncture, joint lubricating and antiinflammatory medications and stem cell therapy.

## **Medial Compartment Disease (MCD)**

Medial Compartment Disease is a specific form of elbow disease. We will use arthroscopic assessment of the joint to diagnose it and may suggest treatments that are specific to this type of manifestation.

### *Sliding Humeral Osteotomy (SHO)*

A Sliding Humeral Osteotomy is performed to realign the leg to rebalance and redistribute weight away from the diseased area in the case of MCD. It can provide pain relief and allow the joint to heal.

### **United Anconeal Process**

### **Fragmented Medial Coronoid Process**

### **Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) of the Humerus**

### *Conclusion*

Please keep in mind that early diagnosis and swift treatment is critical for successful treatments of elbow dysplasia. We will discuss all the available options for your pet and potential outcomes to find the best fit for your companion.