

CANINE HIP DYSPLASIA

TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT (THR)

Introduction

THR is a treatment option for canine hip dysplasia (CHD). Please refer CHD pamphlet, also available on this site, for more detail before considering specific treatment options.

The aim of THR is to replace the damaged ball (femur head) and socket (acetabulum) (Fig.1) with artificial implants there by creating a stable, pain free hip joint (Fig.2).

THR should be considered a salvage procedure and should generally be performed only after other treatment options have failed. Patients must be selected carefully to minimise the risk of potential complications and should not have any other sites of infection (dental disease, skin disease for example) present. If complications do occur they can be severe and while many cases may be managed to allow the retention of the THR implants, a number of them may need to have all of the surgical implants removed. Approximately 95% of cases having THR go on to have good to excellent function. Most dogs tend to do so well after a single hip replacement that the majority of owners (75%) elect not to have the second hip replaced.

A variety of implants are available, however they all have potentially serious complications which may occur in a low percentage of cases. If complications occur they can be frustrating and expensive to manage. Therefore careful patient and owner selection is critical to improve the chances of surgical success. Most studies report an 85 to 95% long term success rate with THR surgery.

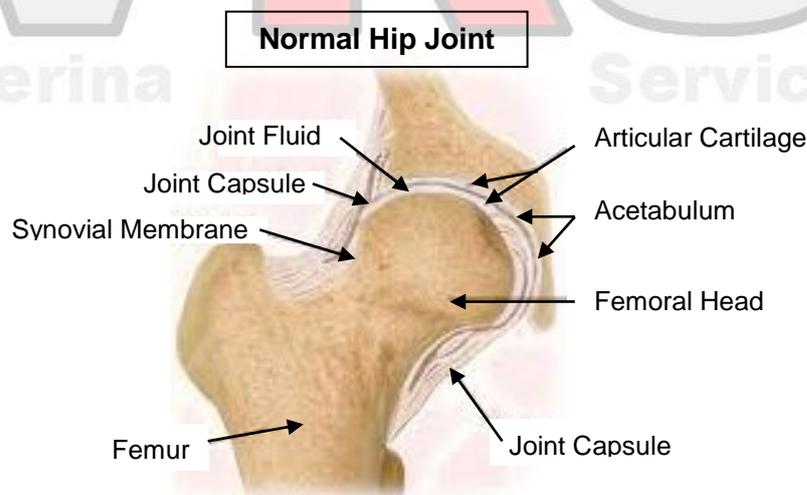


Figure 1

THR Surgery

The ball and socket are both effectively removed from the hip joint and both are replaced with implant replacements which allow a stable hip joint to be formed (Fig.2).

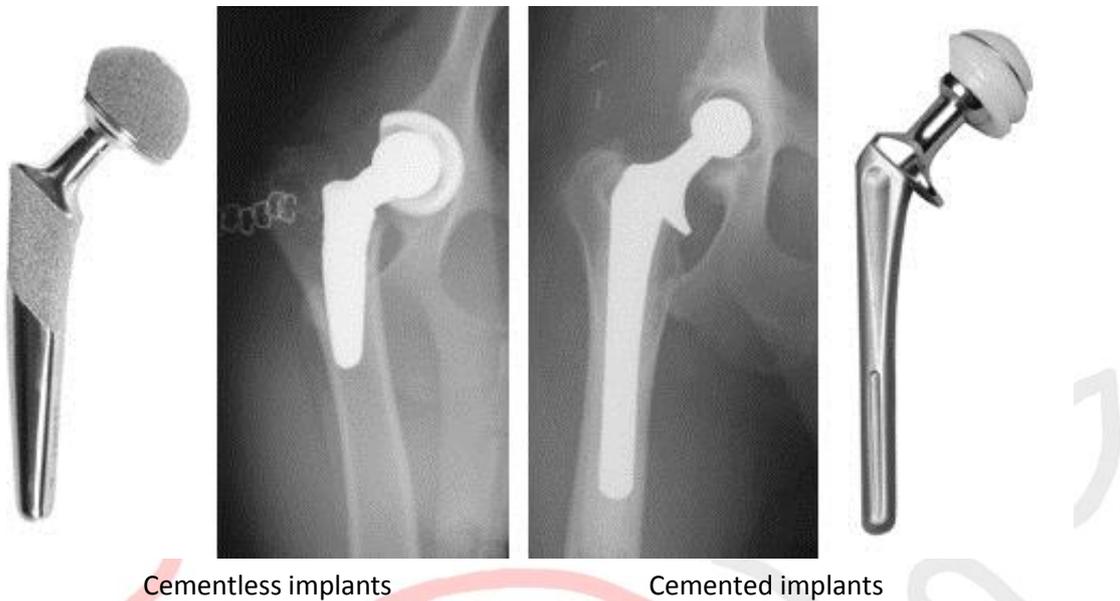


Figure 2

Postoperative Care

Aftercare may vary depending upon the specific implants used. In general it should be anticipated that there will be strict cage rest in an environment with non-slip flooring is generally recommended for 8 weeks after surgery and the dogs should be taken out to toilet on a leash. No running, jumping or playing should be allowed throughout this period. Follow up X-rays will generally be performed at approximately 6-8 weeks after surgery to assess the implant integrity and the degree of healing, thereby allowing the degree and duration of ongoing rest to be determined. Excessive early activity will increase the risk of surgical complications or failure. Luxation (dislocation) of the joint, fracture of the bones, infection and loosening of the implants are some of the potential complications which can occur. Most animals make an uneventful recovery. Your dog will be kept in for a few days after surgery for monitoring and management of their pain relief. They will then be sent home with further pain relief and instruction on rehabilitation. A check up would normally then be performed approximately 5 days after surgery and again at 10-14 days after surgery. If external skin sutures are present they will need to be removed at this time. Once healing is sufficiently advanced walking, controlled running, swimming and wading in water should be promoted to maintain the muscles around the hip joint which serve an important role in stabilizing the hip joint. All exercise types should be gradually introduced to reduce the risk of injury after a period of rest.

Summary for THR

- Careful case selection is critical to improve the chance of a successful surgery.
- Aftercare is critical to improve the chance of a successful surgery.
- Strict rest is required for 6-8 weeks after surgery.
- The surgical outcome is good to excellent in the majority of cases (85-95%).
- While uncommon (<5-10%) complications can be frustrating and expensive to manage if they occur.
- Follow up x-rays will be required 6-8 weeks after surgery.