

## **Early Screening for Hip Dysplasia in Large Breed Dogs**

Congratulations on your decision to spay or neuter your pet.

This is one of the most important and morally responsible decisions a pet owner must make. In choosing this procedure you are simultaneously working to reduce pet overpopulation and ensuring that your pet will not endure one of a number of health related illnesses associated with intact dogs.

As a pet owner of a large breed dog (adult weight >60 pounds) you should be aware of the relatively high incidence of hip dysplasia; this can be as high as 30-40% and in some breeds may reach 80%.

Hip dysplasia is the abnormal development of your dog's hips. This may begin as early as 12-30 weeks of age and can manifest as difficulty rising and/or jumping, stiffness after exertion, or weakness in the rear legs (bunny-hopping or lameness). As your pet ages and the instability progresses, the cartilage will wear away ultimately leading to bone-on-bone contact within the hip, debilitating arthritis and diminished capacity for physical activity of any kind. If present and untreated hip dysplasia may cause irreversible damage by 12-14 months of age.



Normal Hips



Dysplastic Hips

On the other hand, if identified early (under the age of 8-12 months) it may be possible to “save” your pet's hips and preserve their function over the entire course of his or her life. There are several time-sensitive procedures that may be considered in a pet in which early identification of hip dysplasia has been performed.

While your pet is under anesthesia for their alteration procedure, it is an ideal time to screen them for this potentially disabling condition with a simple hip X-ray. This provides a superior-quality radiograph (compared to a non-anesthetized patient) and does not significantly affect the length of anesthesia. If you elect to proceed with this screening your pet's X-ray will be reviewed by our board-certified radiologist and you will be advised whether a referral to one of our specialists is indicated. The cost for this simple screening is only an additional \$128.50.

Whereas we hope that you and your pet may be spared the lifetime debilitation associated with hip dysplasia we would like to offer you as early an opportunity as possible to potentially intervene.

Please speak with our staff to help answer any questions you may have regarding a hip X-ray or hip dysplasia in your pet.