

Total Hip Replacement

If the surgeon has recommended a total hip replacement (THR) surgery as the best option for your dog, there are certainly some questions that you may be thinking about. We have compiled the most common questions below and please don't hesitate to call if there are some left unanswered.

How do you determine if my dog is a candidate for THR?

Your dog's hip(s) discomfort, decreased ability to ambulate, hip joint conformation and physical exam findings give the doctor an idea of whether or not your pet is an ideal candidate for a THR. Reluctance to partake in normal activities, stiffness, and lameness are common indications of potential problems. Your pet should be healthy otherwise and ideally have no other joint problems (however, other problems do not necessarily rule out that we can perform a THR). Your pet should be a mature age (generally at least 10-12 months) to ensure the skeleton has finished growing. Xrays of the hips will help diagnose hip problems as well as ensure the skeleton is mature.



What preliminary tests must be run?

We will need recent (within one month) bloodwork which includes a serum chemistry panel and a complete blood count (CBC) to rule out anemia and check the function of internal organs. We will also need to obtain urine culture. These tests will ensure there aren't any infections lingering (which generally show up first in the urinary tract) that may enable bacteria to translocate to the hip replacement site. We will also need to examine your pet's skin carefully to rule out any local infections.

We will also need to obtain hip Xrays while your dog is under sedation to be able to measure what size implants will need to be used. The sedation is necessary for the comfort of your pet since the positioning may be mildly painful. This will only take about an hour and your pet will return home a little sleepy.

How long will my pet stay in the hospital?

They will stay for usually one night and go home the day after surgery.

What can I expect from the surgery?

The goal of this procedure is to return your pet to a normal hip function and pain-free life. Improvements in attitude and activity level are commonly seen after the proper rehabilitation period. The success rate is approximately 85%, meaning that there is a 15% chance of a complication happening. However, these complications may be minor or be addressed successfully with a second surgery.

What are the complications with a THR surgery?

All surgeries present the risk of complications including anesthetic risks. Total hip replacement procedures run the risk of dislocation of the hip joint, infection, loosening of the implant, and nerve damage. The risk of complications is about 15% but can usually be successfully resolved. Sometimes, however, removal of the implant may be the only option to address a complication.

Do you use cemented or cementless implants?

We have the ability to use both types of implants, however cementless are most commonly used for younger patient. The type of implant used will be decided based on assessment of your pet's bone conformation and age and discussed with you. The major benefit of cementless implants is thought to be a reduced rate of implant loosening, which is why we recommend that type of implant for young animals.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with further questions.