



WHAT TO EXPECT AT VRC

Canine Total Hip Replacement (THR) Surgery

WHAT IS A CANINE TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT?

- The hip is a ball (head of the femur) and socket (acetabulum) joint. In a total hip replacement, the ball and socket are replaced with prosthetic implants. This surgery is typically performed for severe hip dysplasia or osteoarthritis in dogs. The goal of this surgery is to improve function of the joint and alleviate discomfort for the patient.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT SURGERY?

- The total hip replacement is a major surgical procedure that requires your veterinarian to extensively examine the overall health of your pet. The first step is to schedule a consultation with your orthopedic surgeon to discuss the procedure in detail. We require your pet to have preoperative radiographs (x-rays) and labwork to ensure they are a good candidate for the procedure and in good health to undergo anesthesia safely.
- Because this surgery includes implants and is a lengthy procedure, there is a risk of infection. The condition of your pet's skin plays a very important role in the outcome of the surgery. If there are any signs of infection, we need to address this prior to surgery. If there is any evidence of active infection on the day of the scheduled surgery, surgery may need to be postponed to decrease the risk of infection.

WHAT DOES THE RECOVERY FROM THR LOOK LIKE?

- Most dogs remain in the hospital for an average of 1-3 nights following this surgery. Strict rest during the recovery phase is crucial. Patients will need to have their activity limited for at least 12 weeks following surgery. This means short leash walks only to use the bathroom and no running, jumping or rough play. Your surgeon will give you instructions about a gradual return to activity once your pet is ready. Limiting your pet's activity can be challenging, but failure to do so can significantly increase the risk of possible complications. For the first 10-14 days, your pet will need to wear a cone or e-collar at all times they are not under your direct supervision to avoid any licking of the incision.
- Follow up with your surgeon will also be important for your pet's long term success. Re-evaluations are typically scheduled at 6 weeks and 12 weeks post-operatively.

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WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF THR SURGERY?

- As with any surgery, unfortunately complications are possible with a total hip replacement. Complications can include:
 - Dislocation of the hip
 - Loosening of the implant
 - Fracture of the femur
 - Infection
 - Nerve damage among others.
 - Strict adherence to the post-operative instructions can help minimize the risk of complications.

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES TO A TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT?

- While total hip replacement is the gold standard for large breed dogs with severe hip dysplasia, there are some alternatives to this procedure depending on your dog's age, lifestyle and other factors. These alternatives include medical management and other surgical procedures such as a femoral head and neck excision or triple pelvic osteotomy.



Open 24/7, 365 days a year

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