

Hip Dysplasia in Dogs

Hip dysplasia is a genetic condition that affects the hip joint, causing pain and stiffness. While it cannot be cured, there are effective ways to manage the condition if your dog is diagnosed.

What is Hip Dysplasia?

Hip dysplasia occurs when a dog's hip joint grows abnormally, leading to abnormal wear and tear on the joint surfaces. This abnormality can result in inflammation, swelling, and significant pain for your dog.

Causes of Hip Dysplasia



- **Genetics:** Hip dysplasia is primarily a hereditary condition, often seen in medium to large breeds.
- **Weight:** Being overweight can exacerbate the condition by increasing strain on the joints.
- **Development Factors:** Factors such as the amount of exercise during puppyhood, overall weight, and general bone development can influence the severity of hip dysplasia.

Signs of Hip Dysplasia in Dogs

Symptoms can vary but commonly include:

- Stiffness, especially after rest
- Difficulty moving around (e.g., getting up or lying down)

- Limping on one or both legs
- Abnormal gait (e.g., swaying walk or both back legs moving together)
- Reluctance to play or go for walks
- Quiet or depressed behaviour
- Unsteady on their feet
- Poor muscle development over the rear end

Signs may manifest between six to twelve months of age, as the hip joint continues to



develop during this time.

Important: Dogs often hide their pain, making it crucial to monitor their behaviour and seek veterinary attention if you notice any concerning symptoms.

Treatment Options for Hip Dysplasia

Non-Surgical Treatment

Depending on the severity, your vet may recommend non-surgical options, including:

- **Anti-Inflammatories:** To help manage pain.
- **Special Diet:** Weight management through diet may be necessary for overweight dogs.
- **Managed Exercise Regime:** A controlled exercise plan to keep joints healthy without overstraining them.

- **Physiotherapy:** To improve mobility and reduce pain.
- **Hydrotherapy:** Using water resistance for low-impact exercise.
- **Rest:** Ensuring plenty of rest with limited, controlled exercise.

These treatments can help alleviate discomfort, but ongoing support may be needed



throughout your dog's life.

Surgical Treatment

In severe cases where non-surgical treatments are ineffective, your vet may recommend surgical options aimed at stabilising the hip joint and reducing pain. The specific procedures will vary based on the individual case.



Breeds Prone to Hip Dysplasia

While any dog can develop hip dysplasia, certain breeds are more prone, particularly:

- Labradors
- Golden Retrievers

- German Shepherds
- Rottweilers
- French Bulldogs

Medium and large dog breeds are generally at a higher risk.

Conclusion

If you're considering getting a puppy, choose a breeder who screens for hereditary problems. If you're contemplating breeding your dog, ensure they are screened for potential health issues, including hip dysplasia. Regular veterinary check-ups can help in early detection and management of this condition, improving your dog's quality of life.