VETERINARY SPECIALTY CENTER

2051 Waukegan Road, Bannockburn, Illinois 60015
847.459.7535 Fax 847.808.8900
Email: surgery@vetspecialty.com

Total Hip Replacement (THR)

How It Works

- The surgeon removes the femoral head (ball), prepares the acetabulum (cup) and implants the new cup, femoral stem and head.
- Prosthetic implants used in a THR fit with precision and mimic the original joint anatomy and function.
- Cats and dogs from 5-170 pounds are candidates for total hip replacement.
- THR provides the best opportunity for a full return to function and life-long mobility.

Indications

- Hip dysplasia and end-stage arthritis are the most common indications
- Dislocation of the hip
  Fractures of the head and neck of the femur
- Legg-Calve-Perthes disease (avascular necrosis of the femoral head)
- Physeal dysplasia with slipped capital femoral epiphysis in cats
- Almost any dog or cat over 9-10 months of age can have a THR performed. In giant breeds, we schedule surgery when the dog is skeletally mature (11-12 months of age).

Procedures

- Preliminary consultation is performed to assess the hip joints and ensure that the patient is a good candidate. At that consultation, we will also discuss the surgery, risks, cost, and recovery.
- We will evaluate your pet thoroughly to be sure no other underlying issues are leading to clinical signs such as issues affecting the spine or knee joints.
- We obtain sedated radiographs (X-rays) so that templating software can be utilized to plan the surgical procedure.
- We do not perform THR on pets with significant medical problems.

Post-Operative Care

- Most pets are hospitalized for one to two days after surgery, with some higher-risk patients needing a more extended hospital stay to protect the stability of the prosthetic joint.
- Dogs often begin using their limbs a few days after surgery. Activity is supervised and limited to leash walks until we confirm healing at 16 weeks.
- The incision typically heals in 10-14 days and sutures can be removed at that time. Icing the leg during recovery can minimize swelling and inflammation and helps with discomfort. Keeping the E-collar in place is critical in preventing a pet from licking and chewing, which increases the risk of infection.
- We provide detailed instructions for confinement and activity levels during the recovery process. Sedated recheck radiographs will be done during the recheck exam at six weeks post-op and will dictate the next steps.

Prognosis

- Over 95% of the patients who receive a THR should be able to use the new hip for the rest of their lives.
- Diligently following the after-care instructions leads to a complete recovery and better mobility.

Potential Complications

- Complications of THR are low and include infection, femoral fracture, luxation of joint components and loosening of the implant. Most of these complications are prevented by following the after-care instructions.
- In rare instances, injury to the sciatic nerve occurs. Sciatic nerve problems are transient and recovery usually occurs within a few weeks.

Next Steps

Our surgeons have more than 50 years of combined experience treating hip dysplasia in pets. VSC has been performing hip replacements for more than 30 years and offers multiple surgical and non-surgical options for restoring mobility and reducing pain secondary to hip problems.

If your pet has hip issues, you should request a referral to meet with Drs. David Brdecka, Gabrielle Hybki, or Mitch Robbins. They will evaluate your pet and discuss all options for treatment.