

Fractures of the Pelvis

Surgery Service



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Specialistssm**

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Locations

Auburn Hills

3412 E. Walton Blvd.
(West of Squirrel Rd.)
(248) 371-3713

Grand Rapids

1425 Michigan St. NE
(East of Fuller Rd.)
(616) 284-5300

MVS Southfield

29080 Inkster Rd.
(North of 12 Mile Rd.)
(248) 354-6660



Anatomy

Anatomically the pelvis is somewhat like a box. The front part of the pelvis is attached to the spine by the sacroiliac joint. The hind limbs are connected to the mid part of the pelvis by the hip joint. The colon, urethra, vagina and sciatic nerve pass through the canal of the pelvis.

Signs and diagnosis

A fracture is synonymous with a broken bone. Because the pelvis is like a box, it must be broken in two or more places for the pelvic bones to be unstable. The most common cause of pelvic fractures is trauma such as being struck by a motorized vehicle or taking a fall. Affected pets will bear minimal to no weight on the fractured side of the pelvis. If both sides of the pelvis are fractured, then the pet may not be able to walk at all. X-rays are required to make a diagnosis of a pelvic fracture. Damage to the sciatic nerve may occur from direct trauma to the pet during the accident or may occur if the nerve gets trapped between fractured bones. The surgeon will also evaluate the urinary tract to make sure that the bladder has not been ruptured. In addition, chest x-rays are made to ensure that there is no trauma to lungs, ribs, and diaphragm. Should there be significant trauma to these other organs, surgery may be delayed so that your companion can safely undergo anesthesia and the surgical procedure.

The day of surgery

In preparation for anesthesia, results of your companion's blood work will be reviewed. Our anesthesia and surgical team will prescribe a pain management program, both during and after surgery that will keep your companion comfortable. This may include a combination of general anesthesia, injectable analgesics, epidural analgesia, oral analgesics, and anti-inflammatory medication.

Surgery

Fractures of the pelvis that involve the hip joint, ilium and the sacroiliac joint usually need to be repaired. Fractures of the hip joint and ilium usually are repaired with a plate and multiple screws. If the sciatic nerve function is impaired, surgery should be performed as soon as possible to release pressure off the nerve, in the hope to prevent permanent damage.

Fractures of the Pelvis Continued...

Dislocation of the sacroiliac joint is repaired using one or two screws and potentially a pin.

Home care

After surgery, you can continue to give your pet a prescribed pain reliever to minimize discomfort. It's also extremely important to limit your pet's activity and exercise level during this post-operative period. Rehabilitation exercises can be done at your home or if you choose, by professionally trained therapists at an animal rehabilitation center. Rehabilitation therapy should be continued until your dog is bearing weight well on the operated limb (typically 2 - 4 weeks after surgery). Detailed instructions will be given to you after the surgery. The surgeon will monitor the healing process with two follow-up exams. The first is scheduled at two weeks after the surgery and the second is at five to eight weeks after the surgery; during the second visit the repaired bone will be x-rayed. By 8 weeks after surgery, most dogs and cats are fully weight-bearing on the operated limb, although exercise should be limited during the first three months after the procedure.



Results

Surgical repair of pelvic fractures has benefits of early pain relief, less collapse of the pelvic canal and impingement on organs that pass through the canal, and relief of pressure off the sciatic nerve if it is entrapped. If present, nerve damage has been reported to recover in 81% of patients that have pelvic fractures. Uncommon complications after surgery may include break down of the repair (due to lack of exercise restriction), nerve damage, poor bladder control, and fecal incontinence.

Reference

Jacobson A, Schrader SC. Peripheral nerve injury associated with fracture or fracture-dislocation of the pelvis in dogs and cats: 34 cases (1978 – 1982). J Am Vet Med Assoc. 1987 Mar 1;190(5):569-72.

Fractures of the Pelvis Continued...

Assessment and recommendations

Patient: _____ Date: _____

Treatment

- Surgery is recommended by an MVS surgeon
- Conservative treatment is recommended

The following has been prescribed

- No medications or special diet are necessary at this time
- Pain controlling medication: _____
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication: _____
- Antibiotics: _____

Exercise

- Confine your pet to the house other than very short leash walks necessary for bowel movements and urination
- Restrict exercise to leash walks 10 minutes twice daily

Preparation for surgery

- Start fasting your companion at midnight before the surgery; water should not be withheld
- Pepcid AC 10 mg tablets: give _____ tablet(s) with water (use a syringe if needed) at 6 AM on the day of surgery

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