

Legg-Calve-Perthes Disease

Surgery Service



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Locations

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What is Legg-Calve-Perthes (LCP) Disease?

This disease of young small breed dogs results in destruction of the head (ball) of the femur bone. The underlying cause of this condition is likely genetic. The condition typically affects only one hip, but 17% of dogs have both hips affected. This disease is due to a disturbance of the blood supply within the femoral head that subsequently results in death and resorption of the bone. The femoral head collapses which results in hip pain.

Signs

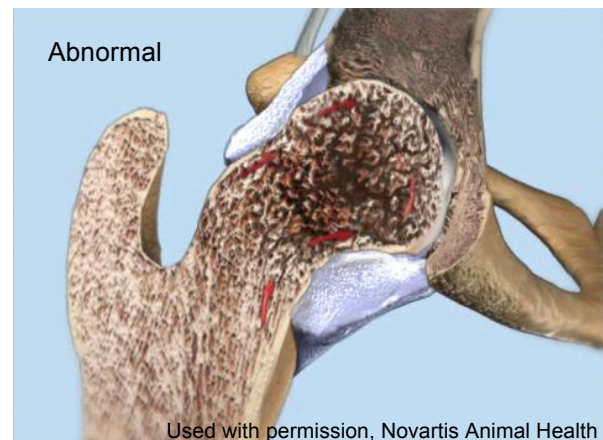
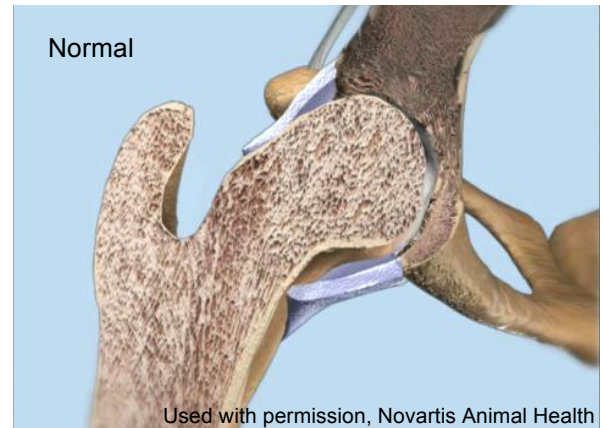
LCP affects small breeds of dogs with the Yorkshire terrier most commonly affected. Warning signs of LCP that are most commonly seen by pet owners may include hind limb lameness, muscle atrophy, stiffness on the affected limb when first getting up from a nap, exercise intolerance, and pain upon petting the hip. The lameness initially is mild, but with time becomes severe. Examination by a veterinarian typically reveals pain on extending or spreading the affected hip(s) apart.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of LCP is based on the evaluation of x-ray images of the pelvis. In order to obtain properly positioned x-ray images, your dog may need to receive twilight sedation. Typical signs on the x-rays include a moth-eating appearance of the femoral head, a misshapen femoral head and arthritis (bone spurs) of the hip joint.

The day of surgery

Our anesthesia and surgical team will prescribe a pain management program, both during and after surgery that will keep your companion comfortable. This will include a combination of general anesthesia, injectable analgesics, epidural analgesics, oral analgesics and anti-inflammatory medication.



Legg-Calve-Perthes Continued...

Treatment

Nonsurgical treatment of LCP includes exercise restriction and administration of medications to relieve pain. Usually this conservative treatment modality is not effective and surgery is needed. The treatment of choice is the femoral head and neck ostectomy (FHO). This procedure involves the surgical removal of the misshapen femoral head and neck. Following this procedure, the hip is kept in place with the soft tissues around the hip and the hip muscles. As healing progresses, a false hip joint forms as scar tissue develops in the hip. After surgery, rehabilitation therapy is critical to help the hip to have normal range of motion and to rebuild the muscles around the hip. Rehabilitation by a professional therapist is strongly recommended. This part of the treatment is as important as the surgery.



Aftercare and results

After surgery, you can continue to give your pet a prescribed pain reliever to minimize discomfort. Exercise such as swimming and walks is encouraged following FHO. Rehabilitation therapy should be continued until your dog is bearing weight well on the operated limb (typically 4 to 6 weeks after surgery). Your companion's surgeon will monitor the healing process with at least two follow-up examinations at 2 weeks and 2 months after surgery. By 2 weeks after surgery, most dogs are weight bearing on the operated limb and by 2 to 4 months after surgery your companion should make a complete recovery.

Complications of femoral head and neck excision may include decreased range of motion of the false joint, loss of function of the limb, nerve damage, and infection.

The FHO has the best outcome in small dogs; however, intermittent hip soreness may be seen with heavy activity. Thus intermittent use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories may be needed.



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Legg-Calve-Perthes Continued...

Assessment and recommendations

Patient: _____ Date: _____

Treatment

- Surgery is recommended
- Surgery is not recommended

The following has been prescribed

- No medications or special diet are necessary at this time.
- Prescription joint diet: _____
- Neuroceutical: _____
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication: _____
- Other medication: _____

Exercise

- Unlimited
- 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

*Composed by Daniel A. Degner, DVM, DACVS
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