

Superficial Digital Flexor Tendon Luxation

Surgery Service



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Locations

Auburn Hills

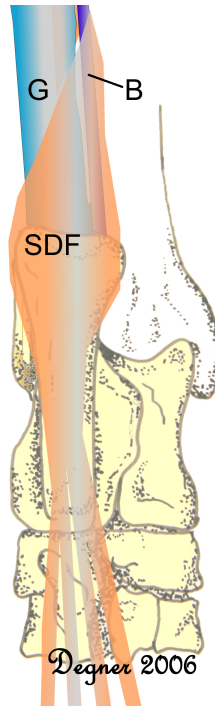
3412 E. Walton Blvd.
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Anatomy

The Achilles' tendon is attached onto the heel bone (calcaneous bone) of the hind limb and is responsible to keep the heel bone elevated of the ground. The Achilles' tendon is actually composed of 5 distinct tendons: the gastrocnemius (G), superficial digital extensor (SDF), and three other less significant tendons called the gracilis, semitendinosus, and the biceps femoris tendons (B). The gastrocnemius tendon is quite large and attaches onto the calcaneous bone. The superficial digital flexor widens over the calcaneous bone to form a cap that is attached to the bone by on each side by fibrous tissue (called a retinaculum). As this tendon passes down the backside of the paw it splits into four separate tendons that attach onto each of the four toes (digits) of the hind limb.

Cause of tendon dislocations

If the retinaculum that keeps the superficial digital flexor tendon in place gets torn due to a traumatic injury, the tendon will pop off to the side of the calcaneous bone and cause lameness. In Shetland Sheepdogs and Collies, the end of the calcaneous bone may be malformed which predisposes the tendon to dislocate out of place.

Signs and diagnosis

Most dogs that have this kind of injury are mature large-breeds. Lameness of a hind limb is the most common sign of a dislocating superficial digital flexor tendon. Sometimes the owner will hear a popping noise and intermittent lameness from the hind limb as the tendon dislocates. The diagnosis of a dislocating superficial digital flexor tendon is made with a physical examination, however, x-ray of the area may be used to rule out other problems. Prior to anesthesia and surgery, blood work is done in order to evaluate the health of the internal organs.

Surgery

Surgical repair of the retinaculum of the tendon is recommended for a successful outcome. An incision is made over the site of the dislocating tendon and the torn retinaculum is sutured together. If the dislocating tendon is chronic, a fascia or collagen graft may be needed to complete the repair. The limb is supported in an extension cast or splint for a period of 1 month after surgery.

Home care

After surgery, you can continue to give your pet a prescribed pain reliever to minimize discomfort. The cast/splint will need to be changed every one to two weeks at our hospital until

Tendon Luxation Continued...

no external support is necessary. It's also extremely important to limit your companion's activity and exercise level during the post-operative period. Detailed instructions will be given to you after the surgery. The surgeon will monitor the healing process every 1 to 2 weeks, during each cast/splint change. Once the limb is no longer supported with any cast or bandage, exercise is gradually increased over a period of one month.

Results

Surgical repair of a superficial digital flexor tendon luxation allows for the best outcome. Most patients respond very well to the treatment with resolution of lameness. Uncommon complications following surgery include infection, pressure sores from the cast and recurrence of the tendon dislocation.

Assessment and recommendations

Patient name: _____ Date: _____

Treatment

- Surgery is recommended by an MVS surgeon
- No surgery 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
- A splint/bandage has been applied. Twice daily, please check for:
 - Swelling of toes (if there is no swelling the middle two toe nails will touch each other)
 - Cold toes – this may indicate poor circulation
 - Foul odor
 - Discharge seeping through the bandage
 - Increased lameness
 - Excessive licking or chewing at the bandage
 - Please note that a new bandage/cast will feel strange to your pet initially, but he/she will typically get used to it within 12 hours. If your pet continues to be uncomfortable or more lame after the bandage has been changed, please call us.

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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