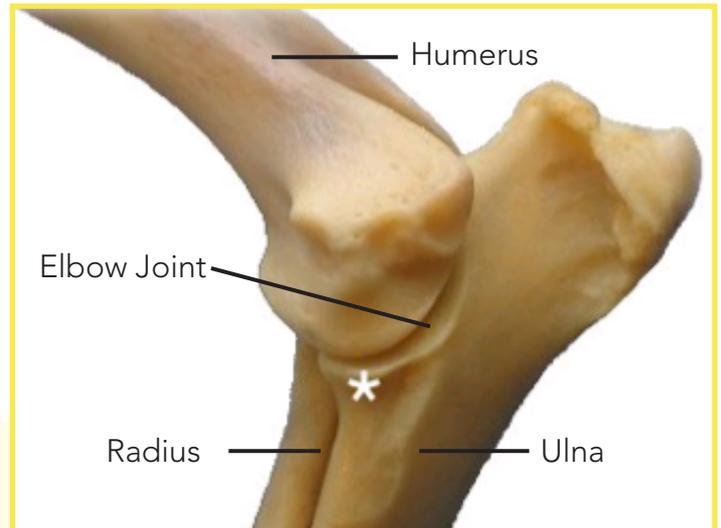


ELBOW DYSPLASIA & F.C.P.

Elbow Dysplasia is a term used to describe abnormalities in the congruency of the elbow joint and can involve a variety of different forms. The most common form of elbow dysplasia is fragmentation of the medial coronoid process (FCP). In FCP, excessive loading and injury of the joint surface on the inside of the elbow occurs. Injury involves abrasion of the normal joint cartilage and/or bone fragmentation. The result is joint pain and progressive degenerative arthritis.



(*indicated medial coronoid process in image above)

FCP is a developmental disease. It is most frequently seen in large breeds of dogs (especially Labrador Retrievers and Rottweilers), but may also occur in smaller breeds. Signs of pain and lameness usually occur during the rapid growth phase from about five to twelve months of age. Injury to the joint cartilage caused by FCP is irreparable, therefore any resulting arthritis may continue throughout life.

Initial diagnosis of elbow dysplasia involves physical examination and radiography (x-rays). Confirmation of the diagnosis and identification of coronoid process injury, however, requires CT imaging or examination of the joint at surgery. Many dogs may experience mild and short term signs of elbow pain that may not require detailed evaluation or surgery. Where signs are more severe or persistent, especially in at risk breeds, your veterinarian may recommend referral for specific assessment and surgery.



Lateral Radiograph (X-ray) of the elbow

While lameness may be more pronounced for one front leg, FCP is very commonly present in both elbows. For this reason thorough examination of both elbows is recommended. If coronoid disease is confirmed the requirement for surgical treatment will be discussed with you. In surgery the fragmented piece of coronoid bone and any damaged cartilage are removed. This is performed through a key-hole surgery (arthroscopy) on the inside of the elbow using a specialised camera and instruments. As this is a joint surgery, it is performed in an operating room with full attention to sterility, as for all orthopaedic procedures performed at BVSC.

Usually your dog will be admitted the morning of surgery for preoperative checks, planning and pre-emptive pain control. An overnight stay post operatively is routine and if comfortable and walking the next day they are usually discharged with at home pain control.

Rechecks are required two weeks postoperatively to reassess the surgical site and again at eight weeks postoperatively, to determine suitability to return to unrestricted activity. Activity restriction is essential for your dog's comfort and healing, however early controlled activity and physiotherapy are beneficial. Typically this means room confinement when not attended for the first 2 weeks followed by gradual increases in leash walks over a six week period. Rehabilitation with an animal physiotherapist is recommended and can be arranged for you.

While complete return normal activity cannot be guaranteed, most dogs experience a significant improvement in comfort and function. Unrestricted activity can usually resume by six weeks after surgery.

Complications post surgery are uncommon and similar to any orthopaedic procedure. Possible complications can include bleeding from the surgical site, swelling and infection.

Financing Surgical Treatment For Your Pet

BVSC understands that surgical treatments are both unexpected and costly. We can assist your access to third party external finance companies working with us to help spread your payments. To make an appointment for your pet ask your veterinarian for a referral and contact our friendly reception staff on **(07) 3264 9400**.