

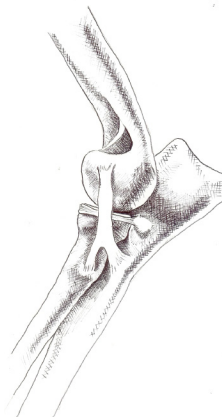
Osteochondritis Dissecans

Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) is an abnormality in development of bone from cartilage. Small areas of cartilage will maintain next to normal developing bone. The cartilage is softer than bone and can crack or loosen. As a result, within joints such as the shoulder, elbow, knee, and hock (ankle), a flap of cartilage can develop causing lameness.



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OCD frequently occurs more in large and giant breeds. Notably, breeds affected most commonly include Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and Newfoundlands. Other breeds that can be affected include Bernese Mountain Dogs, Chow Chows, German Shepherds, Mastiffs, Old English Sheepdogs, Rottweilers, and Standard Poodles. In cases such as OCD of the shoulder, male dogs are more commonly affected than female dogs.



Most dogs will start showing clinical signs as young as 4-7 months of age. Most are recognized to have a lameness that becomes worse with heavy exercise and after prolonged rest. In some cases, no obvious affected leg can be determined as OCD is in both limbs.

Radiographs are often diagnostic but in more difficult cases other tests, including arthrography (x-rays with contrast within the joint), CT scan or MRI may be used.

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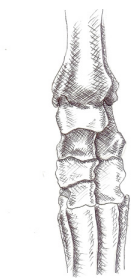
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What is the treatment and prognosis?

Surgery or arthroscopy will often be the treatment of choice. Factors that may affect this decision include the joint affected, the degree of secondary arthritis, or if a flap of cartilage is not present. The goal of surgery is to retrieve the flap of unhealthy cartilage and prepare the area where the flap developed to allow a scar-type cartilage (fibrocartilage) to develop.



Shoulder: Surgery or arthroscopy is the treatment of choice. 75% of patients will show signs of lameness after surgery, 23% show mild lameness and 2% show persistent lameness.



Stifle (Knee): Surgery is indicated if a large fragment is recognized. Chances for complete resolution of lameness are small.

Tarsus (Ankle): Most dogs will show mild improvement in lameness immediately following surgery, but will continue to show some gait abnormalities once they have returned back to normal activity levels.

What is the aftercare?

Following surgery, patients should be restricted to leash confinement for a minimum of 4 weeks. Following that time period, a gradual increase in activity will occur over another 4 weeks. Pain management with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs will usually continue for the first 4-7 days after surgery. Long term management, whether surgery was performed or not, includes weight restriction, controlled exercise and pain management as needed.

Do you have any recommendations?

As genetics play an important role in the development of OCD, any patient diagnosed with this condition should not be bred. In addition, parents, siblings or previous offspring of an affected patient should not be bred.



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