

Hip Dysplasia

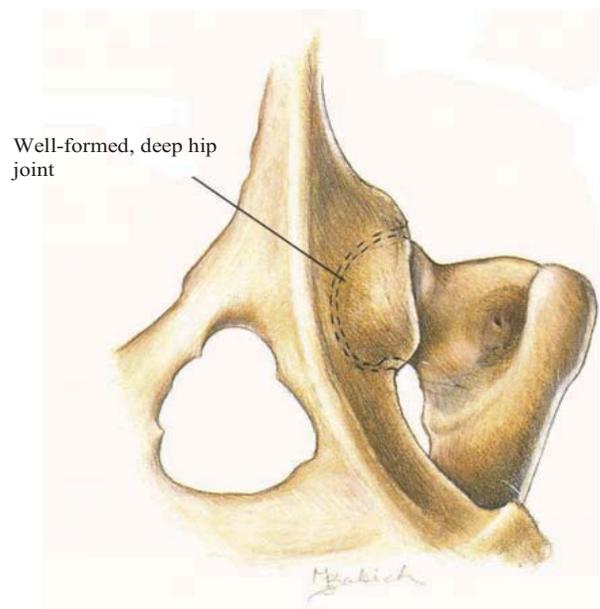
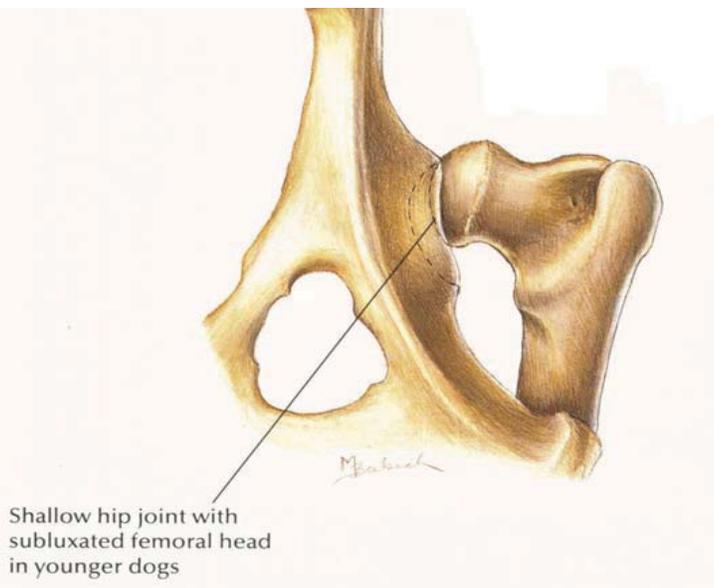
Hip dysplasia is a deformity of the hip, which occurs during growth. The hip joint is a “ball and socket” joint. During growth both the ball (the head of the femur or thighbone) and the acetabulum (the socket in the pelvis) must grow at equal rates.

In hip dysplasia this uniform growth does not occur. The result is laxity of the joint followed by degenerative joint disease or arthritis, which is the body’s attempt to stabilize the loose hip joint.

The degree of lameness that occurs is dependent on the extent of these arthritic changes and may not be correlated with the appearance of the hip joint x-rays. Some pets with significant signs of hip dysplasia (such as degenerative joint disease) on x-rays may not exhibit signs while others with minimal changes may experience severe pain and lameness.

There are two primary causes of hip dysplasia, genetic and diet. The genes involved have not been conclusively identified, but it is believed to involve more than one gene. New advances in nutritional research reveal that diet plays an important role in the development of hip dysplasia. Large breed puppies should be fed a special diet during the first year of life to reduce this risk.

Hip dysplasia is hereditary and is seen in some breeds more than others. It is predominantly seen in larger dogs such as German Shepherds, St. Bernard’s, Labrador Retrievers, Old English Sheepdogs, and Bulldogs. Mixed-breed large dogs are also at risk for developing hip dysplasia and should also be fed a special large breed growth diet for the first year. Radiographs of the hips can be certified by OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) as poor, fair, good, and excellent. Only those adults having higher grades should be used as breeding stock.



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