

New Treatment for Canine Hip Dysplasia

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

[September 2002 News](#)

Researchers at the veterinary schools of the University of Wisconsin Veterinary School and North Carolina State University have developed a new surgical technique for the treatment of [hip dysplasia](#) in dogs. The technique, called Juvenile Pubic Symphysiodesis, or JPS, yields results at a younger age and is much less costly than hip dysplasia surgeries done later in life. The new surgical procedure decreases the instability and pain of hip dysplasia by changing the angle of the dog's hip joints at a very early age.

"The pups are up and about the same day of surgery," says Dr. Dueland, a veterinary orthopedic surgeon at the University of Wisconsin. "That's very different from the three months of restricted exercise necessary per hip when dogs with hip dysplasia have other hip surgery later in life."

Puppies at high risk for developing hip dysplasia, as determined by orthopedic examinations and x-ray evaluation [PennHIP (University of Pennsylvania Hip Improvement Program)], can receive this JPS surgery. During the 30-minute procedure, electrocautery is used, via a groin incision, to fuse the pubis, or the lower pelvic bone. The fusion changes the hip's growth pattern.

Normally, the entire pelvis expands uniformly as the puppy grows. In dysplastic dogs, the bone's original configuration allows the ball of the femur to slip partially or completely out of its hip socket, causing the maturing dog pain and sometimes crippling the animal. The JPS surgery improves the hip position by turning the fused pubis into a hinge. Constrained by the hinge, the upper portion of the pelvis that contains the hip socket swivels or rotates to a different angle as it grows. As the dog matures, the new angle helps cup the ball of the femur, or leg bone, in the hip socket.

"The advantage is that this surgery can be done at a very young age," Dr. Dueland explains. "We recommend between 12-18 weeks. By 24 weeks, the 'window of opportunity' has closed. The younger the dogs, the greater the improvement." Signs of hip dysplasia can develop as early as 4-5 months of age in dogs with severe cases.

The procedure can be performed in combination with an [early spay or neuter](#). Dr. Dueland stresses that all pups that receive the JPS should be spayed/neutered, so they are not accidentally bred and permitted to perpetuate hip dysplasia. Hip dysplasia is principally an inherited condition.