

Shoulder osteochondritis dissecans (OCD)

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Overview: Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) is a developmental abnormality that occurs in immature, large breed dogs. In patients with this condition, a portion of the cartilage fails to form into bone during the normal process of cartilage transformation, and then fractures. A flap of cartilage develops and results in pain and inflammation of the joint. Though it can occur in most of the major joints, OCD occurs most commonly in the shoulder joint.

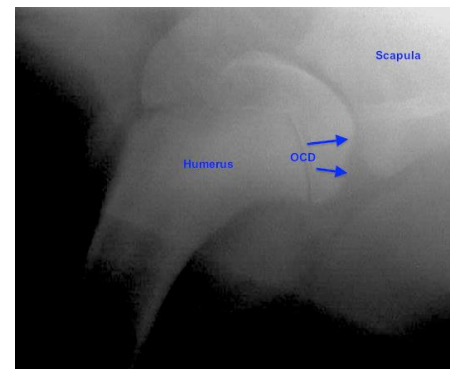
Signs/symptoms: Signs are usually seen in young, fast growing large and giant breed dogs. They exhibit front leg lameness and shoulder pain. It is often seen in 4-8 month old puppies, though is occasionally seen in older dogs.

Diagnosis: Radiographs (x-rays) are performed to diagnose the condition when an OCD lesion is suspected. Often the opposite leg is radiographed as well because it is not uncommon to see lesions on both sides.

Treatment: Some dogs may respond to “medical management”, i.e., exercise restriction, oral anti-inflammatories, etc. If they do not respond or lameness is severe, surgery is recommended. Surgery involves removal of the cartilage flap and stimulation of the underlying bone to cause appropriate cartilage formation. Usually surgery is only recommended on the side that is lame, even if a flap was seen on radiographs on the opposite leg.

Aftercare/outcome: Exercise restriction is recommended for 4+ weeks during recovery. It is not usual for dogs to develop a seroma, or collection of fluid that has the appearance of a water balloon, under the incision. This will often resolve without treatment.

Dogs do well with this shoulder OCD surgery, though a small percentage will go on to develop osteoarthritis in the shoulder. OCD lesions in other joints carry a variable, sometimes worse, prognosis.



OCD lesion in the caudomedial compartment of the shoulder joint (indicated by blue arrows)

Please refer to the American College of Veterinary Surgeons website

www.acvs.org for additional information or call Dr. Boswell at 269-312-4227