



## SURGERY

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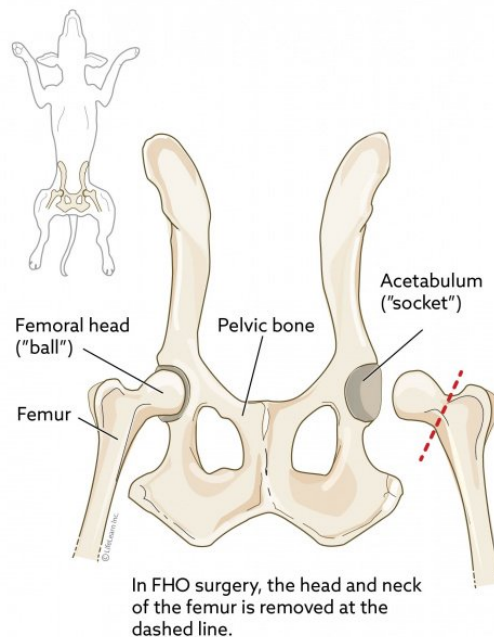
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## Femoral Head Ostectomy (FHO) Surgery

**Femoral Head Ostectomy (FHO)** restores mobility to the hip by removing the head and neck of the femur. This removes the femoral head, the “ball” of the ball-and-socket joint, leaving just an empty socket. The muscles of the leg will initially hold the femur in place and, over time, scar tissue will form between the acetabulum and the femur to provide cushioning that is referred to as a “false joint.” Although this joint is anatomically very different from a normal hip joint, it provides pain-free mobility in most patients.



**Reasons for performing FHO surgery:** The primary goal of an FHO is to remove bone-on-bone contact, restoring pain-free mobility. The most common reasons for FHO include:

- Fractures involving the hip. When a fracture involves the hip joint and cannot be repaired surgically (either due to patient considerations or financial considerations for the owner), an FHO may provide the best option for pain-free mobility.
- Hip luxation/dislocation (associated with trauma or severe hip dysplasia). In some cases, a hip that is out of socket cannot be replaced with manipulation or other medical means. Surgical repair of hip luxations can be costly and is not always successful, so many dog owners elect FHO for small dogs with hip luxation.
- Severe arthritis of the hip. In chronic, end-stage arthritis, the cartilage that protects both the head of the femur and the acetabulum can become eroded away, leading to painful bone-on-bone grating whenever the hip is moved. Performing an FHO can remove this point of contact and alleviate pain.
- Legg-Perthes disease (also known as avascular necrosis of the femoral head). This uncommon condition, most frequently seen in miniature and toy breed dogs, causes the bone within the femoral head to begin to die at early age. The bone collapses due to these degenerative changes, leading to severe pain. Removing the femoral head via FHO removes the source of pain for the dog.

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**Prognosis and General Considerations:** Most dogs recover fully after FHO surgery and regain very good function of the affected leg. Although the leg may have a slightly decreased range of motion or decreased limb length after surgery, these impacts are typically minimal and do not impact the pet's quality of life.

**Risks of General Anesthesia:** We listen closely to your pet's medical history and carefully review any provided medical records. Your pet will have a detailed physical exam, appropriate pre-operative screening blood tests, and possibly radiographs to identify and control anesthetic risk factors. Even with these measures, anesthesia remains a small, but present risk. For this reason, we use the safest intravenous and inhalational anesthetics. Our anesthesia doctor and highly experienced technical staff are well trained in the administration and monitoring of all types of sedation and general anesthesia. Your pet is carefully monitored by a formally trained and experienced licensed technician during anesthesia and recovery and is under the care of our ER veterinarians and veterinary staff the night following their procedure.

**Prognosis and General Considerations:**

**At Home:** Your pet will typically go home the day after surgery. During your scheduled discharge appointment, we will review our detailed, written home care instructions. We will also answer any questions and address any concerns that you may have at that time.

In the first several days post-operatively, your dog will be healing from the surgical procedure. Because bones and muscle are cut during this procedure, the focus during this period will be on pain control. Please give all medications as prescribed. Moist heat may also be recommended during this period, to provide comfort and decrease stiffness.

- We will provide medications for discomfort during the post-operative period.
- In general, you should plan for 8-12 weeks of activity restriction after surgery.
- We recommend that you keep your pet in relative confinement (crate, kennel, smaller room with a baby gate, "mud" room, laundry room) when unsupervised.
- Slow, short leash walks 3-5 times per day on a level surface are recommended.
- We would like to re-evaluate your pet and take radiographs to assess healing 8 weeks after surgery. The amount of exercise and activity will be adjusted at this evaluation based upon the amount of bone healing, but generally activity will be increased gradually between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> week after surgery.

And remember, we are here for you if you have questions. Just give us a call at **919-545-1001**, extension 2 or send us an email at [surgery@quartetvet.com](mailto:surgery@quartetvet.com)