

Hip Surgery: Femoral Head and Neck Excision

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Femoral Head and Neck Excision (FHNE) is a surgical procedure that is used to alleviate pain in the hip joint and return the patient to use of the limb by creation of a *pseudoarthrosis* or false joint.

FHNE can be used to treat hip dysplasia, severe arthritis of the hip, hip fracture, avascular necrosis of the femoral neck or chronic luxation of the hip joint.

FHNE (Fig 2) works by the removal of the femoral head and neck. A fibrous pad of tissue forms between the smooth base where the femoral neck once was and the *acetabulum* (hip socket). The hip muscles (the gluteal, internal obturator and gemelli muscles) which are left undisturbed, provide the support for the hip.

Physical therapy (Fig 3) is important to recovery. PT restores weakened and tight muscles returning the patient back to a pain-free and functional use of the limb once again in the majority of cases. ***It is advised to work with a trained veterinary physical therapist for chronic cases or in medium to large breed dogs where recovery can take longer.***

Conditions treated with FHNE:

Hip Dysplasia is a developmental condition in young dogs and cats that starts as laxity in the joint. What should be a tight ball and socket type joint is loose. The abnormal stresses on the joint result in degenerative changes to the cartilage and underlying bone (**Fig. 1**). Early symptoms include pain when running or a reluctance to jump up. They often run with a characteristic "bunny hopping" gait where they use both hind legs as one unit. They may not want to run at all or may quit playing due to discomfort.

Hip arthritis can be a result of hip dysplasia or chronic wear and tear on the joint in an extremely active, working or sporting dog or the result of abnormal stresses on the joint due to obesity. Untreated or misaligned fractures can also result in arthritis.

Avascular necrosis

(Legg-Perthes disease, Epiphysiolysis) occurs in young dogs and cats. There is a loss of the blood supply to the developing bone of the femoral neck. The bone collapses on itself and the femoral neck may fracture. The exact cause of this condition is not well understood. FHNE removes the fractured and weakened bone.

Figure 1 - Hip dysplasia

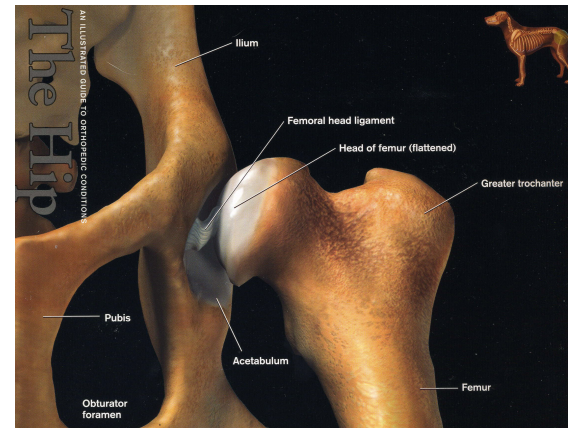


Figure 2 – FHNE

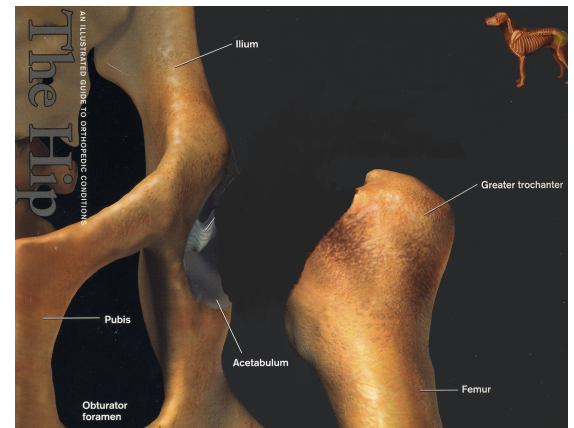


Figure 3 – Physical Therapy

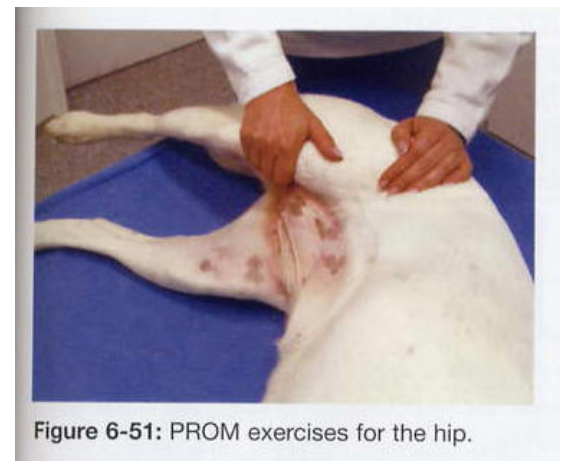


Figure 6-51: PROM exercises for the hip.

Illustrations are reproduced from the following sources:

Figure 1 and 2: Novartis Animal Health "An Illustrated Guide to Orthopedic Conditions"