

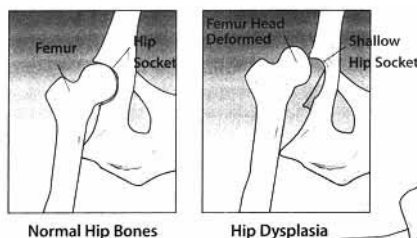
WHAT IS HIP DYSPLASIA?

BY JILL HOEHLEIN

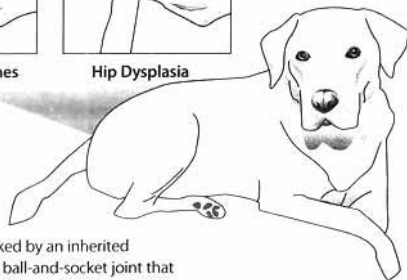
Hip dysplasia is far more common in large breeds and golden retrievers certainly have their share. It is a non-life threatening condition due to an error in the formation of the hip joint. This error is commonly due to a genetic default that leads to a malformation of the hip joint which is a ball and socket joint. Researchers have not yet identified the gene/genes. Only 25% of dogs with hip dysplasia came from parents with apparently no hip problems. It occurs where the femur (thigh bone) sits in the hip. See diagram from [DogWatch](#) Vol. 12 March 2008 Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

This misalignment leads to a poor fit and the joint is "wobbly" so the bones grind against each other. This constant trauma leads to degeneration of the joint (osteoarthritis) where the cartilage begins to breakdown. This is why so many people and pets take a combination of glucosamine & chondroitin – these nutraceuticals help in the restoration and health of cartilage. George Lust, Ph.D. Baker Institute for Animal Health at Cornell University has

reported that "35-40% of some large breeds (i.e. goldens) that weigh more than 50 pounds have hip dysplasia." While at the same time breeds like Great Danes do not. In young dogs, this is often noticed by observing a wobbly gait or a bunny-like hop to their running gait. In an older dog, they usually have stiffness in the hip and



Hip dysplasia is marked by an inherited malformation of the ball-and-socket joint that connects an animal's thigh bone (femur) to its hip.



difficulty rising from lying down or climbing stairs.

How do you know for sure it is hip dysplasia? Make a visit to see your vet who may do any of the following tests:

- ♣ extended hip radiographs
- ♣ Penn Hip method
- ♣ dorsolateral subluxation (DSL) test (this can be used on puppies 4-8 months old)

What can be done?

- ♣ Palliative care – the first and most important step is to avoid your dog being overweight
- ♣ Surgery – this can be all the way up to a total hip replacement

As you help your pal reach an ideal weight, you can also try massage therapy. I have used it and am using it on one of my dogs for therapy. He has arthritis in his elbows and his hips and he has never been overweight, just one of these unlucky dogs. The other dog just plain likes to be massaged. I find that the massage not only aids in keeping the muscle toned which is necessary for general strength, but it also increases the blood flow to the area which can bring needed nutrients and remove waste products from any metabolic activity. It is also a time that I can do range of motion activity - this helps to prevent "locking up" or stiffness in the joint. Plus it feels good - for the owner and the dog.

If surgery is not in your plan of care, there are still some non-drug protocols that you can do that will have a positive impact on your best buddy. Consult your vet for recommendations, instruction, and referrals. 🐾

(Continued from page 5)

Dave & I reluctantly drove to Charles City. We were a mess, but Casey stayed close, leaning on us to comfort as best she could. We left with a seven-year-old, shy female that could never take Sam's place. Well, you know how the story goes; Katie *adopted us* and gave us the comfort and love we needed, like only a golden can do.

When Casey died after a short illness, Dave and I wished to comfort Art and Judy as they did for us after our loss. The best we can do is to remember Casey for what a loving special girl she was. Casey was the fashion queen of the last Heritage Humane Society Luncheon. Casey brought love, joy and long ago memories to those she visited as well as to all those scared quarantine and foster dogs including our Katie. The most comforting thought we can share is that we know our Big Boy, Sam, was waiting with his favorite toy to share with Casey when she arrived at the Rainbow Bridge. We can imagine them running towards each other, tumbling and jumping with such glee, whole again. Our hearts are heavy with sadness, but we know Casey and Sam left indelible paw prints on our hearts and in our souls. 🐾

FOSTER SPOTLIGHT

All of our foster homes are special. I can tell you numerous stories, some heartwarming, some hilarious, about the patience, dedication, and understanding found in these special homes. For instance, recently, we have had one young foster dog (who will go unnamed!) who decided she would like to walk on her foster family's kitchen table for fun. We also had a foster dog eat his own adoption contract (along with a stack of bills)! Though all of our foster families are amazing, we have one family in particular that truly has gone above and beyond. Rose and Charles Bennett took in Bella, a scared, shy, and very pregnant young female that we pulled from a shelter a few days before in December 2007. She was due to deliver 8 puppies in a couple of weeks, right at the Christmas and New Year holiday. At one point, they had 11 dogs in their home. Rose tells a funny story about how once the puppies escaped and she came home to find them gallivanting in her tax paperwork. We all owe them a huge thanks for their commitment to SEVA GRREAT, and for all the rescue dogs they have fostered. 🐾