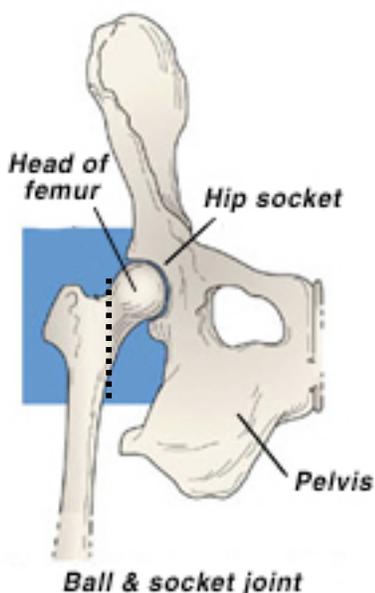




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FEMORAL HEAD OSTECTOMY (FHO)

A Femoral Head Ostectomy is a surgery performed when there is a recurrent dislocation of the hip joint. Dislocation of the hip joint is painful, and this surgery is intended to decrease a dog's long term pain.



What is so painful about a dislocated hip?

The hip is a “ball and socket” joint. When the femoral head dislocates, it means that the “ball” part of the joint is no longer properly functioning. As the ball part of the joint pops in and out of the socket, pain is the result.

How does an FHO help reduce pain?

Removal of the femoral head means that the ball part of the joint can no longer pop in and out of the socket. As the socket fills in with scar tissue, the leg becomes stable and the pain is significantly reduced.

What happens to the joint if part of the hip is removed?

Healing involves the production of fibrous scar tissue and, in a very short time, a false joint is created. Within months, most dogs are running and playing—though they may always have a slight limp.

What is the recovery time?

A lot depends on the pain threshold of the dog. Dogs that are pain tolerant will begin to use their leg very soon after surgery, and these are the dogs that recover most quickly. It is important for a dog to regain complete confidence in the leg, so walking and physical therapy are often used to speed up the healing process. Most dogs are using the leg within 2 weeks, though it takes about 2 months before they are back to normal. Most dogs that have had an FHO will run, jump and play like any other dog, though they usually have a slight limp. As a rule, smaller dogs recover from this surgery much more quickly than large dogs.

Do complications occur?

Complications are rare following this type of surgery. A small percentage of dogs will always experience some limping or discomfort and may require long term anti-inflammatory medication. Others will require a second surgery to remove any residual bone spurs that may cause discomfort (very uncommon!)