



Hip Displaysia

Hip Dysplasia is a very complex subject. There are no hard and fast rules and no easy answers.

Most of the blame has been placed on genetics, however it does not have a simple mode of inheritance. Most research indicates that it is "Polygenic" that is, there are a number of genes that combine to result in dysplasia as well as being multi-factorial meaning that there are non-genetic factors including nutrition and environment that factor in. Add to this growing evidence that it is a systemic disease not limited to just the hip joints. Even when the parents, grandparents and great grandparents show no signs of dysplasia, the off spring can still show up with it. We have seen many excellent dogs over the years with many generations of clearances behind them produce dysplastic puppies. Even under the best conditions there are no absolute guarantees against dysplasia, however dedicated breeders will screen their dogs for dysplasia. There is a lot of controversy as to how much of Hip Dysplasia is genetic and how much is environment. One thing is for sure they both play a part. Now because of this, I have listed below some things you can do which may help your puppy live a long and happy life.

1. A puppy requires a moderate amount of exercise to help maintain muscle tone and minimize laxity in the growing joint. For the first 6 months exercise should be mainly playing. A puppy should never be exercised to the point of exhaustion. Walks are excellent but at a young age they should be short. After 12 months of age you can start jogging but start out slowly and then gradually increasing the distance to 3-4 klms a day is sufficient. Dogs should not jog on hard surfaces such as concrete or asphalt as these can injure the pads of their feet.

2. Never allow your dog to become overweight. It places unnecessary strain on their hips as well as heart and spine. The old story about my dog became overweight after the vet de-sexed my dog is nonsense. The dog became overweight because it stopped being exercised and was not fed accordingly.

3.DO NOT let the dog jump onto the back of Cars or any other high stepping place where they have to jump, especially at a young age. Instead use your muscles and lift them on and off or buy a doggie ramp even though this may not look cool the dog will love you for it in the future. Spare a thought for them on a scorching hot day when they are on the back with no shelter and you are in the air conditioned cabin. They too love the air conditioning.

4. Bedding. Please make sure they have a firm bed off the ground with a nice warm quilt on top. Check regularly to make sure the bed has not become saggy. Like us they also need to be comfortable.

5. Many people have taken up feeding raw diets in an effort to help their dogs live healthier lives. Dogs can eat most of the healthy things we eat except for onions, grapes & chocolate. They love fruit, yoghurt, vegetables etc. Dogs actually look amazing on natural diets so if you can make the time you will really notice the difference.

The reasoning behind Commercial prepackaged dog food in a bag diets is that they are supposed to better approximate how a dog would eat in the wild and how the dogs ancestors would have eaten. Wild dogs will eat raw meat as well as the animals bones. These foods contain potentially vital ingredients that are destroyed during the manufacturing process in making commercial dog foods. However, in saying this we all lead very busy lives and sometimes don't have the time to prepare a raw diet so in this case please use a PREMIUM commercial food diet.

6. A dogs hips and shoulders can be injured by rough treatment either by an older dog or a human. Please try to avoid this happening. Never drag a dog around by the back legs. Never pick a puppy up by the front legs. Dogs do not have collarbones as people do. Picking a puppy up by the forelegs can strain the muscles and ligaments. The proper way to pick a puppy up is with one hand under the chest and the other hand under the rear of the dog.