



Description: A shoulder arthrotomy is a surgical incision into the shoulder joint made in order to visualize and surgically repair problems of the joint.

Indications: A shoulder arthrotomy is most commonly indicated for osteochondritis dissecans (OCD), but is also used to treat shoulder luxation, bicipital tendon conditions, and joint fractures.

Postoperative Care

Medication: Pain medication is generally only required for the first 5-7 days following surgery. Give pain medication only as prescribed and do not give human drugs without first consulting with a veterinarian.

Exercise: One month of strict rest is required to allow the deeper layers of the incision to heal. This means no running, jumping, or playing with other pets. Keep your pet in a quiet, confined area and walk outside on a leash only for short periods of time to eliminate. Too much activity in the early postoperative period may lead to fluid accumulations (seroma formation) under the skin or disruption of the surgical closure or repair.

Recommended Follow-Up: Please schedule an appointment for suture removal 7 to 10 days after surgery. In addition, please contact us immediately if problems occur with the bandage, if an increase in lameness is noted, or if the incision becomes red, swollen, or has drainage.

Prognosis: The prognosis for normal limb function with OCD of the shoulder is good. After surgery most dogs become sound within 4 to 8 weeks. Fractures generally have a good prognosis, but there is still the risk of degenerative joint disease developing in the shoulder subsequent to a shoulder arthrotomy. Potential complications of a shoulder arthrotomy may include seroma formation, joint infection, incision problems, and arthritis. Your pet's recovery and well-being are our primary concerns, so please do not hesitate to call and speak with a surgical technician or surgeon if there are any questions regarding your pet's recovery.