

# Swiss Run Greater Swiss Mountain Dog

## Hip Dysplasia

Hip dysplasia is the abnormal development of the ball-in-socket joint and degeneration that make up the hip. Hip dysplasia can be the result of a genetic make up, poor seating of the femoral head and hip joints, or environmental causes. This condition is most commonly seen in large breed dogs. It can range from chronic to acute dysplasia depending on the severity.

If the hip dysplasia is diagnosed early it could be related to joint laxity. This could tighten up as they get older. If hip dysplasia is diagnosed later in life it is most likely related to joint degeneration. There are many signs to tell if your pet may have hip dysplasia. A few of those signs are decreased activity, difficulty rising, reluctance to run, jump, or climb stairs, hind end lameness, bunny-hopping, or a narrow stance in the hind end. On physical examination there may be pain, loose joints, crunchy sounding, decreased range of motion in the hip joints, lack of muscles in the hind legs, or increased muscles in the shoulder region. There are a few things that cause hip dysplasia. It can come from genetics and breed disposition, rapid weight gain, nutrition level, or obesity.

If hip dysplasia is in question, radiographs should be taken to see the severity of the progression. Most animals need to be under anesthesia to take proper hip radiographs. Your vet will lay your pet on their back and stretch their legs down to get the best view of the hip and pelvic area. What you are looking for is an abnormal development of the hip joint. We also look to see if there is or is not a normal shaped femoral head, arthritis, and the presence of a shallow hip socket. There are other procedures that can be used besides the basic hip radiograph that can be looked at by your veterinarian or by the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation of Animals). There is also the PennHip registry; this procedure uses a distraction radiography method. It measures the laxity of the joints not just the degeneration in the hips.

There are a few treatments that can be done for hip dysplasia. If it is a mild case it could be controlled with glucosamine and chondroitin supplements and pain medication. For more advanced hip dysplasia, surgery should be considered to provide comfort of your pet. There are a few procedures that can be preformed. These procedures range from removing the femoral head to a total hip replacement.

There are many different theories on how to prevent the progression of hip dysplasia. Keeping your pet at a good weight and exercise daily will help keep your pet's muscles toned. You want to exercise in moderation every day with swimming, light jogs, or walks. As discussed earlier, nutrition, exercise, and body weight may all contribute to the severity of degenerative joint disease after the hip dysplasia has developed. When it comes to preventing the formation of hip dysplasia, there is only one thing that all agree on, and that is selective breeding. We know that through selectively breeding animals with good hips, we can significantly reduce the incidence of hip dysplasia. We also know that we can increase the incidence of hip dysplasia if we choose to use dysplastic animals for breeding. Breeding two animals with excellent hips does not guarantee that all of the offspring will be free of hip dysplasia, but there will be a much lower incidence than if we breed two animals with fair or poor hips. If we only bred animals with excellent hips it would not take long to make hip dysplasia a rare occurrence.



BAD HIPS



GOOD HIPS