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# Stem cells regenerative medicine vs. hip surgery in pets

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Posted: Thursday, February 12, 2015 10:08 am

Dr. Ed Mapes, Stonebridge Animal Hospital | 0 comments



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Dr. Ed Mapes, Stonebridge Animal Hospital



Posted on Feb 12, 2015 by Chris Beattie

### Osteoarthritis in general and hip dysplasia in particular

cause misery for a lot of dogs. We see a great deal of dysplasia at our practice because a lot of Labrador retrievers live in this area, but it can arise in any breed. Treatment for this condition has long boiled down to two surgical procedures: the older method of Femoral Head and Neck Ostectomy (FHO) and the more modern approach of total hip replacement.

FHO involves resecting the entire femoral head and neck so that no part of the leg contacts the hip joint (acetabulum). The top of the leg then rests within the gluteal

muscles of the rump, which in time forms a "cup" that the leg rests in.

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This procedure is effective in diminishing pain because the joint is no longer in use, but it is far more effective in cats and small breeds of dogs. Larger breeds don't fare as well because their larger bodies put more weight on the limb and causes more discomfort in those breeds.

Total hip replacement surgery is done with an approach in dogs and very much like the procedures used in humans, and can lead to very satisfactory results and improve mobility.

A cup-like prosthesis is placed within the hip joint in the acetabulum, while a second device is fastened within the femur bone, ending in a stem and ball structure that fits with in artificial joint. This is a major, extremely invasive technique that can be difficult for patients to handle. There are also serious risks in which the implants can fail, leading to catastrophic results:

- The implanted joint can become dislodged from the hip joint for a number of reasons.
- The stem can fracture.
- The femur bone can actually split.

All of these outcomes lead to extremely serious and complicated situations calling for more surgeries to salvage some type of workable limb for the patient.

Even the possibility of tragic consequences has led me to abandon total hip replacement surgery, choosing instead to treat my patients with stem cell replacement therapy.

The results we've had with this procedure have returned mobility to patients without performing major surgery or risking catastrophic complications of failure.

The stem cells are derived from fat tissue that we remove from the patient in a surgery that is simpler than a spay operation. That fat is sent to the VetStem lab, and stem cells arrive two days later at our hospital for implantation into the patient.

Under mild anesthesia, the patient is prepped for the sterile procedure, and then we inject stem cells into any and all arthritic joints. We also use stem cells to treat ligament and tendon damage, such as partially torn cranial cruciate ligaments.

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Our patients that suffered from severe lameness and chronic pain have regained mobility that returns them to normal lives. VetStem also saves the patients' stem cells, making them available for re-implantation even years hence should lameness begin to re-occur. This is a minor procedure that involves only the implantation of cells within the joint(s).

Stem cell regenerative medicine has enhanced our practice, enabling return to function in many dogs without risk of major complications. An important benefit to our pet owners is the fact that this procedure costs about one-third as much as total hip replacement, making it more feasible to help their pets. We now look forward to diagnoses of osteoarthritis in our patients, knowing that we have a fantastic new ability to help them.

Dr. Ed Mapes runs and practices out of Stonebridge Animal Hospital, 5913 Virginia Parkway in McKinney. Visit [here](#) for more information.

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