Hip Dysplasia

Hip dysplasia is a genetic condition resulting from an improperly formed hip joint. Because the joint is loose, the dog’s femur moves around too much causing wear and tear on the joint and secondary arthritis develops. Hip Dysplasia has a spectrum of presentations from asymptomatic to very crippling. Signs of the condition can vary from no symptoms at all to stiffness or difficulty rising, hesitance to exercise or stand on hind legs or climb stairs, and limping or bunny hopping when running.

Large breed dogs are especially prone to the condition. (Labradors, Retrievers, German Shepherds, Rottweilers, Mastiffs, Pit Bulls, Bulldogs, St. Bernards, and Great Danes are just a few of the affected breeds although all sizes are susceptible to the inherited condition. Hip Dysplasia is generally a radiographic diagnosis. Often the condition doesn’t show up until dogs are seniors but sometimes the condition shows up as early as five months of age.

**The SPCA of Solano County does not routinely screen dogs for this condition**. We do not have an x-ray machine on site. Many of our large breed dogs are affected by the condition but show no evidence of the condition while under our care. Regular exercise and maintaining a healthy weight can go a long way toward keeping a dog with Hip Dysplasia healthy but if your dog is showing signs of discomfort, a trip to your veterinarian is recommended to discuss other treatment options like NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) and pain medications if indicated.

