Luxated Hip Toggle Pin Repair

What is the toggle pin repair procedure?

When a pet dislocates their hip there are many methods of treatment available. The first treatment involves trying to reduce the hip under anesthesia without any surgery. In about half the cases, this is successful. If the hip does not stay in place, then you have the option of many surgical procedures to choose from. One surgery involves using the toggle pin where we use an artificial ligament to put the hip back together and suture the joint capsule which helps hold the hip in place. This procedure should not be done if there is extensive damage to the joint surfaces (cartilage) as debilitating arthritis will develop over time and leave your pet with a very painful joint. Unfortunately, this can only be determined during surgery so it is an intra-operative decision whether you pet is a candidate for the hip toggle repair. There are other procedures to salvage the hip joint that the surgeon can discuss with you if you want to try to save the normal ball and socket joint. A femoral head ostectomy is a surgery where we remove the ball portion of the hip joint and allow your pet to form a “false” joint. Lastly, your pet may be a candidate for a total hip replacement.

How long will my pet be in the hospital?

Hospitalization of patients for toggle pin surgery typically ranges from 2-3 days including the day of the surgery and recovery. In general, most patients are discharged 1-2 days after their surgical procedure but extended hospitalization may be required if there are complications or if your pet needs surgery on both hips.

What is the prognosis following surgery?

In general, toggle pin repair is highly successful with about 80-90% of pets making a complete recovery with no pain or re-luxation.

What post-operative care is required after FHO surgery?

Post-operative care following toggle pin surgery involves strict confinement with no running, jumping, playing, or stairs. The first week, your pet may have a bandage on the leg to prevent weight bearing, or you may be required to support your pet’s hind end with a towel during walking outside to go to the bathroom. Confinement in a small room or kennel for the first few weeks is essential to success.

What are the complications or risks associated with FHO surgery?

Overall, complication rate associated with elective procedures is approximately 10-15%. Complications may range from mild and easily resolved, to more severe complications requiring further treatments or diagnostic testing. The most common complication is premature breaking
of the suture and/or luxation of the hip joint. Infection is rare but very devastating and difficult to treat. Some patients have a mild reaction to the artificial ligament and it may need to be removed in a minor surgical procedure after the hip is healed. Lastly, arthritis could form in the joint over the coming months and years despite our best attempts to prevent it.

**Are any follow-up appointments required during the post-operative period?**

In general, recommendations for suture removal are 10-14 days after surgery. Monthly evaluations are then done to assess progression of healing and encourage physical therapy to increase the range of motion within the hip joint. If your pet is using his/her leg normally, then no further appointments are necessary.

The figure illustrates the portion of bone that is removed during FHO.