

Informed Consent

Corrective Osteotomy

Your pet has been diagnosed with a deformity in one of his or her legs. Correction of the deformity is undertaken to improve limb function and/or take stress off the joints on the affected limb. The goal of surgery is to cut the bone (or bones) in the limb and realign them. We will apply some type of bone fixation (external or internal) to hold the bone (or bones) in place while healing occurs. Generally, the prognosis is favorable with surgery, but we need to make you aware of a few of the most common complications that could arise after this surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

The risks of complications after corrective osteotomy is low, about 10-15% of cases. Here are some potential risks:

Incision infection: this is a risk with any surgery and usually treatable with antibiotic therapy

Persistent deformity- the goal of surgery is to straighten the limb. Usually we are able to significantly improve the deformity with surgery, but there may be some cases with severe deformities may not be amenable to complete correction. Understand that we are beginning with a very abnormal bone or bones to begin with and we are trying to correct deformities that are likely present in three dimensions, and that have likely been present for an extended period of time. We can improve limb function and cosmetics with surgery, but we rarely get the limb back to a completely “normal”.

Arthritis (osteoarthritis or OA)/degenerative joint disease (DJD)- one of the goals is to align the bone more normally to keep the joints in a more normal alignment. This may only be possible to some degree . If the joints are not aligned normally, there could be a change in how forces are transmitted through the joints, and that could lead to arthritis in the joints long term. This is addressed on a case by case manner.

Pin tract infection: if an external skeletal fixator was used to hold the bone in its new place, there are pins that require daily care. If the pins get infected, sometimes even more care and likely antibiotics will be required to treat the infection

Implant failure- if there is too little fixation applied or there is too much activity after surgery, the fixation (plates, screws, pins, or bars) could loosen or break prior to bone healing. Generally, the bone takes about 3 months to heal and the fixation has to hold up during this time to remain effective. Generally implant failure requires revision surgery.

Implant loosening- generally due to excess motion or infection, and usually occurs with screws or pins, this complication may not require revision but usually requires removal of

the loose component because it causes irritation. In cases where external fixation is used, loosening is expected during healing and can be an indicator the time is right for pin removal. If healing is not complete however, revision surgery may be needed.

Improper implant position- occasionally implants placed during surgery have to be removed/replaced to achieve the best possible result. In that scenario, revision surgery is generally performed immediately to remedy the problem.

Healing complications- there could be a delay in normal healing (delayed union) where the bone takes longer to heal than expected. If the bone simply doesn't heal, that is known as nonunion and is usually due to excess motion or infection, but usually requires revision.

There can be damage to soft tissues including muscle, tendons, ligaments, nerves, and blood vessels during surgery. Of the soft tissues, usually the most permanent is nerve damage. Luckily, this type of complication is exceedingly rare.