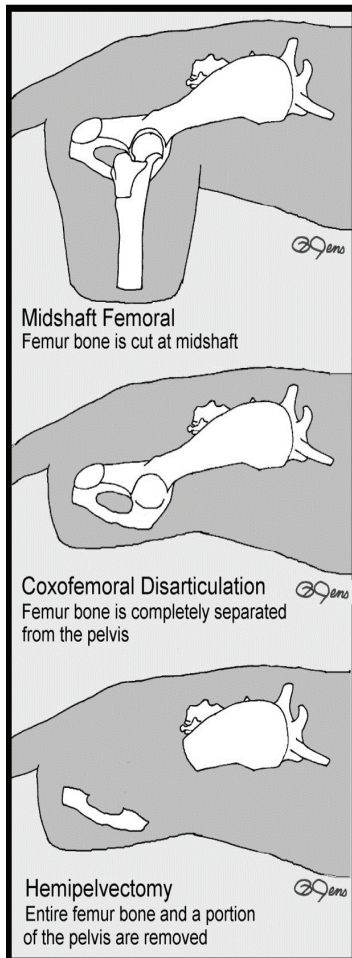


Hind Limb Amputation



Why perform a Hind Limb Amputation?

As with any surgical removal of a body part, hind limb amputations are performed when adequate use, function and/or comfort cannot be re-established by other means. Diseases such as uncontrollable bone infection, bone and soft tissue cancers, and severe injuries may also necessitate amputation. It is important that the amputation surgery site is at a level where the tissues are normal to ensure normal healing and complete removal of the diseased tissue.

Femoral (thigh bone) level

This amputation is performed approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ the way down the length of the femur bone. It is the simplest of the three levels since the surgery site is easy to access and contains few major blood vessels and nerves. The upper portion of the limb that remains is not long enough to be used for support, but may have a more desirable appearance.

Coxofemoral Disarticulation

The coxofemoral joint is the hip joint, and disarticulation is the act of separating two bones from one another at the joint. This amputation is useful when lesions affect the mid-to-upper femur, but have not gone beyond the hip joint. It is more difficult than the femoral amputation because of the large blood vessels and nerves that are located in this area. Dissection of muscles to the joint and disarticulation of the joint is more meticulous than with the femoral amputation.

Hemipelvectomy

When the problem area is located high on the limb, and has gone beyond the hip joint, a hemipelvectomy is the only means of completely removing that problem area. The pelvis is the bone that connects the thigh bone to the spine for structural support. In this procedure, the pelvis is cut to remove a portion of the pelvis as well as the limb itself.

Recovery

Tissue healing from amputation surgery is typically rapid. Within two weeks, most patients are already quite mobile and are no longer in need of pain or anti-inflammatory medications. Dogs and cats will use their tails to maintain balance when standing, walking, running, and jumping. Dogs can even be mobile after amputation of a front leg and a back leg (often outrunning their humans)! It is important to remember that dogs and cats do not have the same concerns about their physical appearance as humans do. As far as they are concerned, as long as the problem and pain are gone and there is someone to care for them, life is good.