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## ***Homeopathy for Hip Dysplasia***

**A gentle approach to chronic pain - Homeopathy for Hip Dysplasia.**

Hip dysplasia (HD) is a congenital malformation of the hip joint most commonly diagnosed in adolescent dogs.

The hip represents a ball and socket joint, with the acetabulum of the pelvis providing the socket, and the head of the femur acting as the ball.

In a dog with normal hips, the acetabulum provides stability by cradling the head of the femur during movement.

A dog with HD has shallow sockets, a misshapen femoral head, or both, creating too much laxity in the joint.

Symptoms obvious in adolescence can include hind end lameness, bunny hopping, and weak rump muscles.

HD is a genetically inherited trait that can be influenced by environmental factors such as obesity, and most commonly occurs in large breed dogs.

Breeders are encouraged to have hip conformation evaluated.

### **HD symptoms.**

Dogs with mild HD may be undiagnosed for many years, often developing arthritis or degenerative joint disease due to chronic wear and tear of the poorly formed joint.

In adult dogs, symptoms of HD can present directly as lameness, hind end stiffness or as non-specific signs of pain, such as weight loss, increased sleeping, lethargy, and coat changes.

Non-specific signs of pain can be misinterpreted as a dog getting older or slowing down.

### **Treatment options.**

In allopathic (i.e., conventional) medicine, HD is commonly managed medically with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

NSAIDs are designed to manage joint pain and inflammation and must be given regularly to maintain effectiveness.

NSAIDs can inflict liver and/or kidney damage, thus patients on NSAIDs need to have regular bloodwork to monitor any organ changes.

Surgery is an option for young dogs with severe HD; different procedures can include removing the head of the femur or total hip replacement.

Surgery for HD is an expensive and aggressive decision and requires intensive physical therapy post-operatively.

### **Hip Dysplasia**

#### **A gentle approach to chronic pain.**

A homeopathic case study demonstrates the effectiveness of homeopathy in resolving not just the primary condition of hip dysplasia, but also the patient's accompanying secondary symptoms.

Non-surgical options for long term management of HD include joint supplements, weight restriction, exercise moderation, chiropractic, acupuncture, hydrotherapy, and physical rehabilitation.

Chiropractic care is strongly advised, as HD patients will show gait asymmetry and/or chronic lameness.

Any gait alteration will create secondary compensatory changes to the spinal column, muscles and other joints.

Chiropractic treatment minimizes the stress placed on other joints and relieves secondary compensatory muscle pain.

All of these management options require long term use to maintain their effect.

### **Healing With Homeopathy**

Homeopathy is an alternative form of treatment that not only treats the symptoms of HD but also addresses the entire symptom picture of the patient.

Unlike allopathic therapy that prescribes one drug for every symptom, a patient under homeopathic care receives a single remedy to address multiple problems.

For example, a dog presenting with hind limb lameness, poor coat and chronic ear infections is given one homeopathic remedy to treat all of these symptoms, and often shows significant improvement after a single prescription.

### **How is this possible?**

Homeopathy is based on the system of *similia similibus curantur*, or "like cures like."

Instead of suppressing the body's natural reaction to an injury (e.g., inflammation from joint pain), a homeopath selects a remedy that mimics similar symptoms if given in high doses to a healthy patient. Giving a remedy that closely matches a patient's symptoms stimulates the body to recognize the source of the symptoms and generate a healing response.

The ultimate goal of homeopathic treatment is to remove the underlying cause of symptoms and stimulate healing, resulting in a stronger, healthier, more energetic patient.

Homeopathic veterinarians receive extensive training to prescribe homeopathically and analyze a patient's response.

Homeopathic treatment of chronic conditions requires an experienced practitioner and should not be attempted by an untrained individual.

Symptoms that can be seen in mature dogs with hip dysplasia, but also how a well selected homeopathic remedy addressed this dog's lameness and improved his overall health.

### **Looking at this case study:**

"Merlin" the dog.

Merlin, a seven and a half year old intact male Border Collie, presented for evaluation of sudden changes to his coat, which was dull, listless and falling out at an alarming rate.

His owner was very concerned that his coat changes might be a sign of a deeper problem.

Physical exam findings included: a dry, dull, thin coat; flaky skin; decreased muscle mass over his hind end; decreased range of motion of both hips, more severe on his right; and walking in a crouched posture.

Blood tests were performed to rule out metabolic or endocrine problems, and all results were found to be within normal limits.

Radiographs were taken, which along with his exam findings, supported a diagnosis of bilateral HD that was more severe in the right hip.

After discussing treatment options with Merlin's owner, nutritional support and chiropractic care were elected for initial treatment.

Merlin was placed on Omega-3 fatty acids and a glucosamine-chondroitin joint supplement.

After four months, Merlin demonstrated increased energy and playfulness, but his coat symptoms persisted.

His walking in a crouched posture had only partially improved, and *he had recently started licking his forearms regularly.*

Obsessive licking is a common displacement activity in dogs and can be a sign of physical or mental stress, or in this case, pain.

At this time, homeopathic treatment was initiated.

In order to find the right homeopathic prescription, a remedy must be selected to match the entire symptom picture of the patient.

Merlin had no history of any other physical illnesses.

He preferred cold places in general and liked to lie on cool tiled floors to rest.

This symptom was notable, for most dogs with arthritis avoid cold because it tends to cause stiffness or pain.

He had recently developed bad doggie breath despite having clean teeth and eating a raw food diet.

Taking his key symptoms into account, a single dose of the homeopathic remedy *Sulphur* in 200C potency was administered.

*Sulphur* is known for offensive nature of body exhalations, dry hair or skin, hair falling out, joint pain/stiffness, rheumatic pain, and tendency to not walk erect.

*Sulphur* also has an affinity for development and growth, which was relevant as the origin of HD is improper growth and formation of the hip joint.

**Five weeks post-remedy, on March 17, 2012, Merlin was doing much better overall:**

his coat was less coarse and he showed improved mobility.

However, over the last two weeks he had been sleeping more and had decreased energy.

On further inquiry, there had been great stress at home, with a job change, preparation for moving homes and a guest dog visiting for a week who didn't get along with Merlin. Extreme stress can challenge a patient enough that his homeopathic prescription may need to be repeated.

Again a single dose of *Sulphur* 200C was administered, and three weeks later Merlin was playful, rising easily in the morning and appearing happier.

On June 7, 2012, his owner reported that his coat was further improved: softer and less dry and dull.

He was stretching well, not licking his front legs, and appeared healthy again.

Merlin continued improving until late November 2012.

His coat became greasy and thin, and his stance became cow hocked (hocks pointing inward).

His owner felt he was 80 percent better in his current state than pre-homeopathy.

Since his symptom picture had significantly improved for seven months, and the symptom relapse was mild – again a single dose of *Sulphur* 200C was repeated on December 1, 2012.

Post-remedy his energy increased immediately, a bloom of dandruff appeared after a week but quickly resolved, and then steadily his coat became softer and shinier.

A curative remedy will often produce a reaction-response during the first week, where a symptom such as Merlin's dandruff briefly flares, and then all symptoms steadily improve or resolve.

Merlin has only needed two more doses of *Sulphur* 200C over the past two years, on September 3, 2013 and July 25, 2014.

The potency was not changed as Merlin had sustained a lengthening response between doses, and each time his return of symptoms was milder than before.

After each dose he had a deep sleep - a good sign of processing the medication - followed by a dandruff bloom that disappeared within a few days, and then had steady improvement: acting brighter, playing more and moving without any postural signs of pain.

In November 2014, Merlin is now over ten and a half years old, has a soft, glossy, thick coat and better mobility than when he was seven.

He has been managed with only homeopathy (five doses over almost three years), a joint supplement and chiropractic care.

His health, strength and vitality have increased over time, and his symptoms have been milder every time they have reappeared.

Merlin is an excellent example of how skilled homeopathic prescribing provides a simple and elegant treatment approach to successful management of the chronic pain of HD.

“Homeopathy combined with raw diet and regular chiropractic treatments, has enabled successful management of Merlin’s HD.

We are thrilled with his overall health and well-being, and delighted he is able to maintain such a good quality of life.