

Hind Limb Amputation

Hind limb amputation options?

Hind limb amputations are typically performed in cases where there is an inoperable tumor associated with the limb or the limb has been severely traumatized beyond repair. The level of amputation is based on the location and type of process affecting the limb. Amputation of a hind limb is commonly performed at one of three levels: proximal femur, coxofemoral disarticulation or hemipelvectomy. It is important that the amputation site is at a level where the tissues are normal to ensure normal healing and complete removal of a lesion.

Proximal Femur

This amputation is performed approximately a few centimeters down from the top of the femur (thigh bone). It is the simplest of the three procedures since the surgery site is easy to access and contains few major blood vessels. Leaving the upper portion of the femur may also result in a more cosmetic appearance.

Coxofemoral Disarticulation

The coxofemoral joint is the hip joint and disarticulation is the action of separating the two bones that create a joint. This amputation is preferred when a lesion, such as a bone tumor, affects the mid to upper femur, but has not reached the hip joint. It is a little more invasive compared to the proximal femoral amputation because of the large muscle groups surrounding the hip.

Hemipelvectomy

In this procedure the pelvis is cut allowing surgical removal of the affected limb and one half of the pelvis connecting that limb to the body. When a tumor is located high on a hind limb and is at the level or slightly above the hip joint a hemipelvectomy is the only surgical procedure that can ensure complete tumor removal.

Recovery

Recovery from amputation tends to be rapid regardless of procedure. Within two weeks most patients are very mobile and no longer need analgesics. Dogs almost always get back to full mobility even after a forelimb amputation with no activity restrictions.

