



Some surgeries can be performed in a minimally invasive manner. Instead of using a single long incision, the surgeon makes several small incisions and does surgery with a small camera and special instruments. Minimally invasive surgery of joints is called “arthroscopy.”

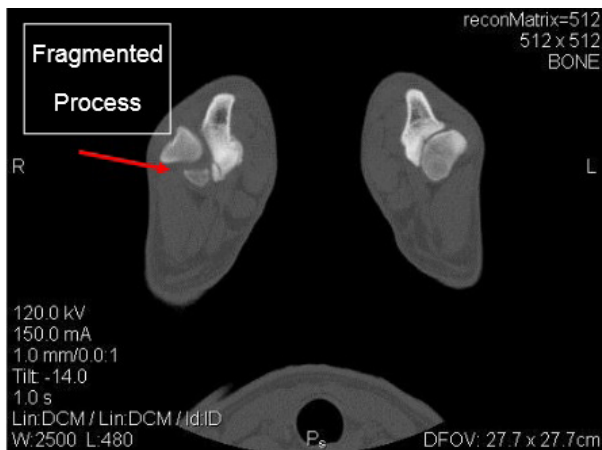
The primary advantage of minimally invasive over traditional open surgery is decreased postoperative pain, generally requiring less pain medication and providing your pet with a more rapid return to normal attitude and appetite. Minimally invasive surgery does not necessarily take less time than traditional open surgery and postoperative activity restrictions still apply. Typically, pets will stay in the hospital one night for this procedure.

Your surgeon may just need x-rays to make a diagnosis regarding what is wrong with your pet’s joint prior to arthroscopy. In some instances, more advanced imaging such as a CT scan or an MRI may be recommended.

The most common veterinary use of arthroscopy is in the elbow. Dogs with elbow dysplasia often have small bone fragments that can be removed or cartilage defects that can be smoothed with arthroscopic instruments. Arthroscopy is also used to explore and treat the shoulder and stifle (knee).

Depending on the problem that your surgeon is treating with arthroscopy, you will get detailed instructions on how to care for your pet after surgery. Please see the “Aftercare for Orthopedic Surgeries” handout for general postoperative care.

Minimally invasive surgery is not for every patient or procedure, but it is a great option for certain situations. Please feel free to ask your surgeon if arthroscopy is appropriate for your pet.



Left: CT image of a dog with elbow dysplasia.

Right: Scope view of the elbow joint of a dog with elbow dysplasia prior to treatment.

