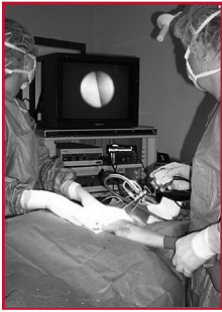


# Veterinary Arthroscopy

## Introduction

Arthroscopy encompasses a variety of minimally invasive surgical applications in which the surgeon is able to visualize, diagnose and treat problems within various joints. Small optical instruments containing a lens and a lighting system are inserted through very small skin incisions to allow access and visualization of joint structures. A video camera



attached to the arthroscope displays, and is able to record, the magnified image of the joint on a video monitor.

## Utilization of arthroscopy in veterinary orthopedics

Initially, arthroscopy was simply a diagnostic tool for planning standard "open" surgery, known as "arthrotomy". With development of better instrumentation and surgical techniques, many conditions can now be also treated arthroscopically. Although nearly all joints can be viewed with an arthroscope, three joints are most frequently examined using this technique in veterinary medicine: the knee, shoulder and elbow. Some of the most frequent conditions amenable to arthroscopic examination and treatment in dogs are:

- Loose fragments of bone and cartilage:
- Osteochondrosis / Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) of the knee, shoulder, elbow
- Inflammation: Synovitis (inflamed joint lining)
- Injuries and hereditary conditions in specific joints:
  - Shoulder - OCD, inflammation or tears of the bicipital tendon, shoulder instability
  - Elbow - OCD, Ununited Anconeal Process (UAP) and Fragmented Coronoid Process (FCP)

associated with elbow dysplasia

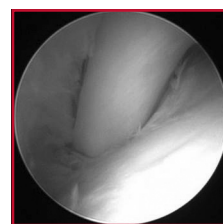
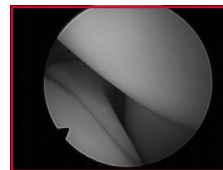
Knee - cranial cruciate ligament tears with instability, meniscal tears

- Tarsus (Hock Joint) OCD

## Advantages of arthroscopy

- Superior visualization due to arthroscopic access and magnification
- Significantly lower pain levels
- Earlier and better post-operative use of the limb

## Arthroscopic procedure



*Elbow joint and biceps tendon within shoulder joint.*

Although much easier in terms of recovery than "open" surgery, an arthroscopic procedure still necessitates the use of anesthetics and the special equipment in a hospital operating room. A small incision is made to insert the arthroscope. Several other small incisions may be made to see other parts of the joint or insert additional instruments.

## Post-operative care

Many patients need little or no pain medication for arthroscopy. Before being released, you will be given instructions about care for your pet's incisions, what activities to avoid, and which exercises should be done to aid recovery. During follow-up visits, the surgeon will inspect the incisions and discuss the rehabilitation program.