

Outlook

Elbow dysplasia is a painful condition that needs lifelong treatment.

Some dogs respond very well to daily management (weight control, exercise control and pain relief), but some do not, and require surgery. If your dog improves with treatment, it's possible for them to live a long happy life.

Most dogs with elbow dysplasia develop arthritis in their elbows later in life. Speak to your vet if you think your dog might be developing arthritis.

Prevention and screening

The only way to prevent elbow dysplasia is to stop breeding from dogs with the condition. Screening programmes are available to check that a dog has healthy elbows before mating. If you choose to buy a pedigree dog, ask the breeder about elbow scores. Speak to your vet before choosing a new dog or breeding from your dog.

Take a look at PDSA's PetWise quiz to help make sure you pick the most suitable pet for your lifestyle.

There are lots of lovely, deserving dogs in rescue centres across the UK. Please consider giving a rescue dog a home.

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet if your dog is showing any of the signs of elbow dysplasia. You may also want to speak to your vet for advice if you own a breed at risk of elbow dysplasia.

You know your dog best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

Before you consider buying or breeding a dog speak to your vet about screening for elbow dysplasia and other inherited diseases.

Breeds at risk of elbow dysplasia

Elbow dysplasia is most common in medium to large breed dogs, including: Labradors, Golden Retrievers, Rottweilers, German Shepherd Dogs, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Newfoundlands and Bassett Hounds. If your dog is at-risk of elbow dysplasia, speak to your vet for advice on proper feeding and exercise while they are growing.

Own a breed at risk of elbow dysplasia?

If you own a breed that is at high risk of elbow dysplasia, you will need to make sure you feed and exercise them correctly, especially while they are growing.

- **Exercise.** Speak to your vet about how to exercise your puppy when they are young. It's important to keep them fit, but too much of the wrong exercise can make elbow dysplasia more likely.
- **Feeding.** It's important to make sure your puppy is fed an appropriate food for their size, breed and age. They are more likely to have problems later in life if they don't have the correct nutrition as a puppy.

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