



"Gunner" - Springer Spaniel with Broken Leg



Gunner

The growth rate in young dogs is extremely rapid. Puppies weighing only a few pounds can change in size tenfold over only a few months. The bones of these young animals need to be extremely active during this period as they grow in both length and width.

Cartilage which is soft and malleable is replaced over time by denser and much stronger bone. Unfortunately these areas of rapidly growing zones between cartilage and bone known as growth plates are areas of weakness when the bone is stressed. Consequently, when puppies break their legs it tends to occur at these growth plate areas. In addition these fractures can occur with surprising ease.

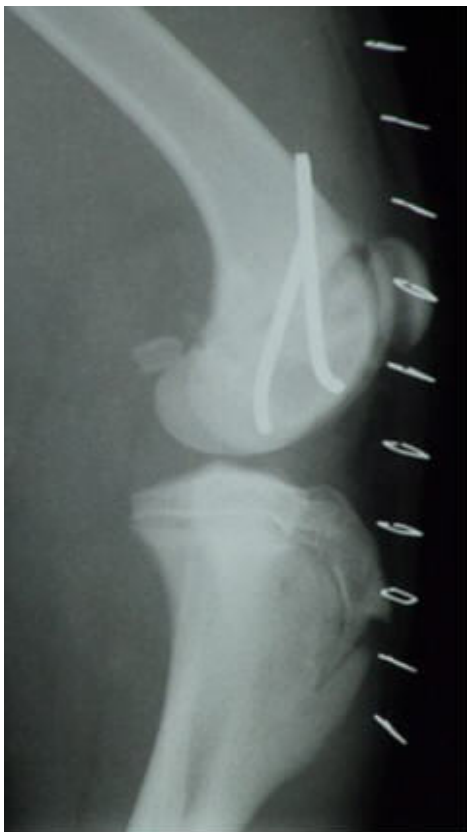
"Gunner" Sparham, a 7 month old Springer Spaniel, was out for a walk with his owners in Derbyshire when his back leg fell down a hole in what seemed a very innocuous fashion. Fortunately, his owners realised that a potentially serious injury had occurred and took him to their local vet.

Once x-rayed it became clear to his vet that he had broken his thigh bone through the growth plate above his knee. The importance of a good outcome in such a young patient was all too apparent and "Gunner" was referred to myself at Fairfield.

Good apposition of the bone ends and rigid fixation is vital in order to effect a good recovery with no long term effects such as osteoarthritis. Fortunately, we were able to reduce the bone ends without too much difficulty and secure them in place with 2 stainless steel cross pins. Post operative x-rays are vital to ensure that we have been successful.

The tense atmosphere of the operating theatre staff is always greatly relieved when after viewing the x-ray I comment " I am fully satisfied with the outcome".....or words to that effect! Needless to say "Gunner" the Springer is recovering well and living up to his breed's name!

Terry Dunne BVMS, Cert SAO, MRCVS



Gunners' post-op x-ray