



Is your pet in need of orthopedic surgery?

A few simple steps can bring you peace of mind and easily save you over \$1,000.

If your pet is in need of orthopedic surgery, you are already distraught about this important member of your family. Surgery can be expensive & there are ways to minimize additional worry over the financial aspect of the surgery.

A few steps of preparation can go a long way in getting you the best quality for your loved one, and for your money.

It is good to contact at least three separate veterinary hospitals to get a cost estimate. Take advantage of any free exams or consultations offered in order to get a second opinion, if necessary. Below, you will find a list of questions that you should present to the hospitals you're considering.

What is the cost? In addition to the cost of the surgery, confirm the cost

of X-rays, blood work and pain medications. Are there any extra charges for after-care bandaging or bandage changes? Bandage changes and X-rays alone can cost up to \$100 each. Additionally, most surgeons require several (at least four) to make sure the surgery is healing properly. Make certain you're aware of possible follow-up exam fees. It is important that all related care items are factored into your budget so that your loved one receives the proper medical attention. Post surgery care is essential to proper healing.

Who is the surgeon? Research the surgeon's qualifications at the online database of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons (www.ACVS.org). Confirm that he/she is a board-certified surgeon. Not all veterinarians are. Would you allow your family doctor to perform surgery on your knee? Of course not. The same applies to the field of veterinary medicine. A board-certified surgeon has done extensive additional training in their area of expertise.

Help avoid a lifetime handicap for your pet by confirming the surgeon is well-qualified. The qualified surgeon is the key factor in determining the quality of the surgery.

What is the success rate? Ask how many times the surgeon has performed this procedure and their success rate. When choosing a hospital, ask if the cost of correction is included if for some reason the procedure is unsuccessful.

Can I get a tour of the hospital? Many vets are more than happy to give a guided tour of their facility when asked. Take advantage of this. It allows you to see first-hand the cleanliness of the facility and their equipment. Is the facility clean?

Do they have state-of-the-art equipment? On-site lab? A hospital with a digital X-ray machine allows the clinic to instantly view their image which saves time and gives instant results. This allows pre and post-surgical X-rays to be taken and the visible changes seen immediately.

Do you have any success stories to share? While patient medical information is confidential, many satisfied pet owners will be happy to share with others their positive experiences. Don't hesitate to ask for success stories. Hearing them will be helpful in supporting you and your family at this time.

Once you are satisfied with the surgeon you have selected, set up a consultation appointment to meet with the surgeon to discuss important elements for you to be aware of regarding the surgery.

Taking the time to walk through these steps can easily save you over \$1,000. Plus, you get the confidence of knowing that you're entrusting a precious member of your family to someone dependable. That is the most important part, after all.

A phone call and free consultation can make it happen.

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