

Arthroscopy

At AESC, we are proud to offer arthroscopy (also called arthroscopic surgery), a new surgical procedure that allows us to evaluate and sometimes treat the inside of a joint in a minimally invasive fashion. It is a surgical procedure that uses a tiny viewing instrument called an 'arthroscope' that acts as a camera in conjunction with arthroscopic instruments (if treatment is needed). The surgical instruments used are much smaller than traditional instruments and instead of looking at the joint directly we view the joint area on a video monitor. During arthroscopy only two small incisions are made - one for the arthroscope and one for the surgical instrument(s). This minimally invasive surgery has a multitude of advantages over the conventional joint surgery of 'arthrotomy' (which means to fully open up the joint by an open approach through the muscles and an incision through the joint capsule). Some of those advantages include:

- Due to the smaller size of the incisions, arthroscopy is less painful for the patient and allows for quicker recovery.
- Due to the magnification provided with the camera, assessment of the joint is more complete and accurate.
- The smaller approach causes less tissue trauma and therefore produces less scar tissue while the tissues are healing.
- Due to the smaller approach, some of the complications associated with an open procedure (such as patella luxation after knee arthrotomy) can be avoided.

Arthroscopy can be used to diagnose and sometimes also treat a joint problem. At AESC we commonly use arthroscopy for:

- Confirmation of a tear of the cranial cruciate ligament in the knee
- Treatment of meniscal injuries in the knee
- Treatment of fragmentation of the coronoid process in the elbow (FCP)
- Removal of cartilage flaps (OCD-lesions) from the shoulder, hock, knee and elbow
- Assessment of the hip joint to evaluate the animal as a candidate for a Triple Pelvic Osteotomy (TPO)

Complications from arthroscopy are rare. The most common complication is leakage of the lavage fluid used during the procedure in the surrounding soft tissues which causes swelling of the area surrounding the joint. This problem resolves within a couple days and can be treated with warm compresses. Other complications include: inability to perform the procedure in an arthroscopic fashion (for example if a lesion is too large to take out with the arthroscopic instruments) which requires conversion to an open arthrotomy, nerve damage, and cartilage damage.

Dr. Lee Breshears and his surgical team provide state-of-the-art diagnostics, technology, surgical procedures, treatments and follow-up for dogs, cats and exotic pets. He also works closely with your family veterinarian to ensure a complete and accurate diagnosis and treatment plan. In addition, Dr. Breshears provides telephone consultations by appointment. Please call 720-842-5050 with questions or scheduling requests.