

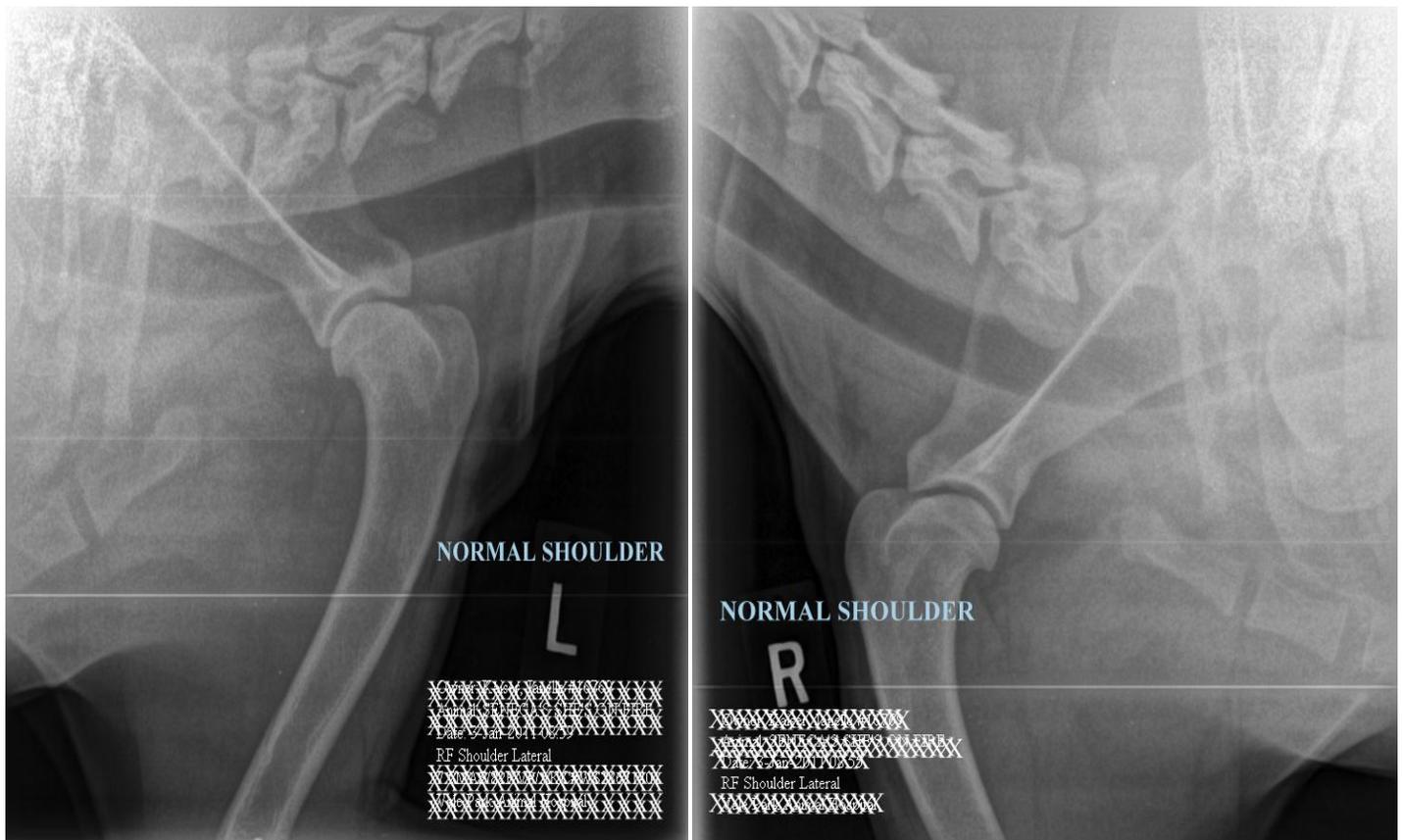
Osteochondrosis Dissecans

Osteochondrosis is a generalized disturbance of the normal development of cartilage. The articular cartilage becomes abnormally thickened and small fissures and cracks may develop. The "dissecans" refers to the stage when cartilage becomes dissected resulting in cartilage flaps. These flaps may remain attached or become loose and fall into the joint space. In GSMD, the vast majority of OCD cases occur in the shoulder joints and occasionally in other joints such as elbows and hocks. The onset of the disease may begin as early as at 4 months and as late as at 14 months. The most typical age of appearance, however, is between 6 and 8 months. Except for very mild cases without flap development, the clinical signs are almost invariably persistent, and less frequently, intermittent lameness. The dog may be stiff after resting and the lameness is usually aggravated by exercise. OCD is diagnosed by radiography. However, in the early stages, radiographic findings might be inconclusive. In such situations, contrast radiography (arthrography) may be necessary for definite diagnosis. Treatment depends on the severity of the case of the OCD lesion in the shoulder joint or lesion evident on the joint surface of the humeral head

Mild cases without cartilage flaps may be treated and heal spontaneously with several weeks of rest and treatment with the drug Adequan and supplements such as Glucosamine and Chondroitin, MSM and Vitamin C. Many cases, however, will require surgery which consists of the removal of flaps and loose fragments and the scraping and smoothing of the defective surface. Surgical repair of OCD of the shoulder usually renders excellent results. Surgical results involving other sites are not as predictable.

Because mild forms of OCD can occur without presenting clinical signs, a prudent approach is to radiograph shoulders prior to breeding so that affected Swissys can be eliminated from a breeding program. In fact, Swiss health data has convincingly shown that by excluding affected dogs and bitches, incidences of OCD can be significantly reduced.

[Osteochondrosis \(OCD\) of the Shoulder By OFA](#)



Greater Swiss Mountain Dog (Post OCD surgery)

