



May 10, 2006

Dear Doctors,

There have recently been articles and communications questioning the safety or efficacy of the Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy (TPLO). **At Vetcision we feel strongly that the TPLO procedure, as performed by our team, is a safe and a highly effective way to treat cranial cruciate deficient stifles in animals.**

The most serious concern is that TPLO plates may cause an increased incidence of cancer in the knee. At issue are the 3.5 mm Slocum TPLO plates that are made by casting molten 316L stainless steel using an older ASTM standard for metallic implants. Metallurgic research performed by the veterinary schools at Tufts University and Texas A&M University are at odds as to whether this is a clinical problem. At Vetcision we noticed physical variability of the Slocum plate and variability in its material properties. For this reason, we switched to a new brand of TPLO plates when they became available in March of 2004. These newer plates are milled from a block of 316L stainless steel that is made by a newer ASTM standard for implants. The newer TPLO plates also have advanced design features and are available in a broad plate design for larger dogs.

There are many variables that may contribute to increased cancer risk at a fracture/metallic implant site in the body. Certainly any implants including plates, screws, and suture that remain in the body are important factors. But other variables that may be important include drugs or chemicals used in or around a patient, variations in surgical technique, surgical time and trauma, and a surgical team's experience.

Tufts University is reporting a tumor rate of less than 0.5% which is only slightly higher than the normal incidence of tumors at this site in large breed dogs. A retrospective study by Slocum Enterprise including 136 veterinarians performing a total of 37,082 TPLOs from 1993-2004 resulted in 28 patients with tumors; an incidence of 0.076%. At Vetcision we have seen one tumor of the stifle region out of 1,316 TPLOs we can track since 1997; an incidence of 0.076%.

If you or your clients have any concerns about TPLOs that have been performed by any surgeon in any facility; please call if you would like to discuss this issue with a Vetcision surgeon. While we do not feel it is necessary, to give your clients peace of mind, we will match Tufts University's offer to remove any **3.5 mm Slocum plate** for a fixed price of \$500. The type and size of the TPLO plate implanted will be found on all Vetcision's TPLO surgery reports.

For further information please see our website: [www.vetcision.com/TPLO.html](http://www.vetcision.com/TPLO.html) or call and speak with a Vetcision surgeon at 781-810-1010.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian T. Huss DVM".

Brian T. Huss, DVM, MS,  
Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Surgeons  
CEO & Chief of Staff Vetcision