Radial-ulnar fractures are common in toy breed dogs usually resulting from falls. Classically this is a short oblique fracture that occurs at or just above the distal physial scar of the radius, and slightly proximal to the physis on the ulna. These fractures commonly result in non-unions when external coaptation alone is used for stabilization. This is likely the result of poor soft tissue coverage (blood supply), and virtually solid cortical bone without a medullary cavity. Surgical stabilization of the radius (the weight bearing segment of the forelimb) with a plate and screws, or an external skeletal fixator, is the treatment of choice. Over-sized implants often required removal after the fracture healed, or osteoporosis could occur. That is not the case with modern implants used at Vetcision.

Rare exceptions to surgical stabilization of these fractures in toy breeds do exist. Very young, actively growing dogs may heal without surgical stabilization. Likewise, older toy breeds with obvious medullary canals on radiographs may be more likely to heal with just external coaptation.

Left: Distal radial-ulnar fractures in a 10 lbs. Rat Terrier plated with a 2.0 mm straight plate and a 5 pound Pomeranian plated with a 1.5 mm cuttable T-plate.
Inset: (left to right) 1.0 & 1.3 mm titanium and 1.5 & 2.0 mm stainless screws; 1.5 mm cuttable and 2.0 mm T-plates. Right: 4 month old Pomeranian with a distal radial-ulnar fracture treated with a splint.

Bringing you excellence in veterinary specialty surgery.

Call or stop by and speak with us about how Vetcision can be a resource for your hospital’s specialty surgical needs.